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HC restores WFI's IOA-led ad hoc panel

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BUSINESS

Market jumps nearly 2% to hit over 2-week high

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SPORTS

I see myself playing till 2032: Vinesh hints at retirement U-turn

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساہ روزنامہ بنگلور

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J&K to vote in 3 phases from 18 Sep, H'yana on 1 Oct

CEC Rajiv Kumar with Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu during a press conference on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Assembly elections will be held in Jammu and Kashmir after a decade in three phases from 18 September, setting the stage for the people of the union territory to elect a government after the scrapping of Article 370 in 2019.

Election Commission also announced that elections to the 90-member Haryana assembly will be held on 1 October and results for both the polls will be declared on 4 October. The two assembly elections will be the first popularity test for BJP and INDIA bloc following the Lok Sabha polls. The three-phase elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir assembly will be held on 18 September, 25 September and 1 October, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told a press conference in the presence of Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu. After suffering reverses in the Lok Sabha polls, including in Haryana, the BJP is keen to regain political momentum by retaining power in the state and putting up a strong show in Jammu and Kashmir, where its strongholds have been traditionally confined to the Jammu division.Congress, however, is hoping to continue with its political revival by toppling the BJP from power in Haryana after 10 years and inflicting losses on its rival in the Jammu region where the two parties are the main contestants. While 24 seats will go to the polls in the first phase in Jammu and Kashmir, elections will be held in 26 seats and 40 seats in the second and third phases respectively.

—PTI

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Bengaluru records hottest August day in 25 years

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

Bengaluru has recorded its warmest August day in 25 years, with the City's India Meteorological Department (IMD) observatory registering a maximum temperature of 23.6 degrees Celsius on Friday morning. According to the IMD last year on the same day the temperature was recorded at 22.9 degrees Celsius. Friday's temperature was .7 degrees above normal. *—Salar News*

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Yunus dials Modi, assures safety of B'desh Hindus

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

In his first direct contact with New Delhi over a week after becoming the head of Bangladesh's interim government, Nobel Laureate Mohammad Yunus on Friday conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a phone conversation that Dhaka would prioritise protection and safety of Hindus and all other minority groups. In the talks initiated by Yunus, Modi reaffirmed India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh and underlined the importance of ensuring the safety of Hindus and other minority communities in the violence-hit country. The assurance by Yunus came a day after Modi said Indians are concerned over the Hindus in Bangladesh. *—PTI*

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Risk of surge in Mpox cases low in India now: Govt

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

The risk for an upsurge of Mpox, once known as monkeypox, infection is very low in India at the moment and there is no need to panic, sources in the Health Ministry said in the wake of World Health Organisation (WHO) declaring the disease a public health emergency of international concern. Official sources said the last case of monkeypox in India was reported from Kerala in March this year. According to official data, 30 laboratory confirmed cases of monkeypox since 2022 have been reported in India. The Health Ministry might write to points of entry such as airports, seaports to be alert and vigilant and deal with suspected cases of monkeypox as per the guidelines in terms of isolation and treatment, an official source told PTI. Union Health Minister JP Nadda is likely to hold a meeting with officials. *—PTI*

FIRs to be lodged within 6 hours of assault on docs

Centre raps colleges on increasing violence against medicos

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Amid widespread protests over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, the Union Health Ministry on Friday said the heads of institutions will be responsible for filing an institutional FIR within six hours of an incident of violence against any healthcare worker on duty.

The office memorandum by Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Dr Atul Goel was issued to directors and medical superintendents of central government hospitals, including AIIMS, and principals of all medical colleges across the country.Recently it has been observed that violence has become common against doctors and other healthcare staff in government hospitals, the memo said.

The OM said a number of health workers suffer physical violence during the course of their duty and many are threatened or exposed to verbal aggression. Most of this violence is done either by patients or their attendants, it added.

The IMA has declared a 24-hour nationwide withdrawal of non-emergency medical services **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

The Health ministry's decision is "too little and too late" as it just needs political will to bring a legislation on the matter, IMA Chief Dr RV Asokan said. As resident doctors across the country held protests over the alleged rape and killing of a trainee women doctor in a state-run medical college and hospital in Kolkata, demanding a central law to protect them, Asokan told PTI that the government is reluctant to acknowledge that there is violence against doctors and hospitals. There is a draft bill that was prepared in 2019 after stakeholders' consultation but it never went to Parliament, he pointed out. The IMA has declared a 24-hour nationwide withdrawal of non-emergency medical services from 6 am on Saturday to 6 am on Sunday.

—PTI

>>>More on Pages 2 & 4

K'TAKA SUSPENDS LEAVES OF GOVT DOCTORS

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

With member doctors of the Indian Medical Association going on strike on Saturday against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, the State government on Friday suspended the leaves of the medical officers and surgeons of government hospitals.

In a circular, the Health and Family Welfare Department said all the district health and family welfare officers and district surgeons along with the administrative officers of all the hospitals should ensure that emergency services are not affected, causing trouble for people. IMA Karnataka unit president Srinivasa S told PTI that its branches across Karnataka will remain shut.

—PTI

THE PLOT THICKENS

Didi blames Oppn for ransacking hospital

WB CM Mamata Banerjee in a protest rally demanding justice for a woman doctor who was raped and murdered, in Kolkata, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

KOLKATA, 16 AUG

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday accused Opposition CPI(M) and BJP of orchestrating vandalism at RG Kar hospital and attempting to obscure the truth behind the rape and murder of a woman doctor by spreading fake news on social media.

Reiterating her demand for capital punishment for the culprits involved in the crime, Banerjee commended the Kolkata Police for their investigation, which was later transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) by the Calcutta High Court.

She also urged the CBI to resolve the case by Sunday and demanded that the culprits be hanged.

Banerjee led a protest rally from Moulali to Dorina Crossing in Kolkata on Friday, demanding justice for the woman doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital last week. *—PTI*

Assessment failure: Top cop on vandalism

Hours after the Calcutta High Court pulled up the West Bengal government and the police over the vandalism of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital that happened on Thursday, Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal has admitted that there was an "assessment failure". Goel asserted that the force was not trying to shield anyone and it tried to be as transparent as possible in the probe into rape and murder the doctor.

K'taka holds ban on SBI, PNB dealings for 15 days

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

Karnataka government on Friday kept its circular in abeyance for 15 days, which prohibited all business transactions with the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Punjab National Bank (PNB).

The decision came after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah considered the two banks' requests.

A government circular issued on 12 August ordered all its departments, boards, corporations, public sector units and universities to withdraw all their deposits and investments in the SBI and the PNB and stop transacting any business with these institutions. "After considering the banks' requests, the Honourable Chief Minister has directed officials of the Finance Department to keep the circular in abeyance for 15 days," the State government said in a release.

It said that putting the previous circular on hold "will allow the banks sufficient time to address the issues and redress the concerns of the government."

The government is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in all its dealings, said the statement.

This action was taken in response to the alleged fraud in the bank branches, which resulted in the non-repayment of fixed deposits made by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) and the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB), the statement said. *—PTI*

VARAMAHALAKSHMI

Actor Prema performs pooja on the occasion of Varamahalakshmi festival in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

GOVT TRANSFERS TOP-LEVEL SECRETARIES

The government today announced a big reshuffle of senior bureaucrats in key department across finance, defence, and minority affairs. Senior bureaucrat Punya Salila Srivastava has been appointed Health Secretary as part of the major top-level bureaucratic reshuffle. Srivastava, who is currently Special Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, will initially take over as the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Department of Health and Family Welfare. *—PTI*

COLLEAGUES INVOLVED IN RAPE: PARENTS

KOLKATA, 16 AUG

The parents of the woman doctor, who was allegedly raped and murdered inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital last week, have told the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that a few interns and physicians of the same medical establishment were involved in the crime, an officer said on Friday.

The parents also provided the central agency, which is conducting the probe into the case on an order of the Calcutta High Court, with names of those who they suspect to be associated with their daughter's killing in the state-run hospital. CBI said that they were giving priority to questioning the doctors and officers of the Kolkata Police who were part of the investigation. "We have zeroed in on at least 30 names whom we will be calling for questioning. We have already started questioning them," he said. CBI summoned one house staff, two PGTs who were on duty with the doctor on that night. *—PTI*

1st test of Gaganyaan mission likely in Dec

ISRO Chairman S Somanath after the successful launch of EOS-08 Earth Observation Satellite, in Andhra's Sriharikota **PHOTO: PTI**

SRIHARIKOTA, 16 AUG

Indian Space Research and Organisation (ISRO) has targeted to launch the first mission of the ambitious Gaganyaan project by December, a top official said here on Friday.

Currently, some of the rocket hardware for the human space programme has reached the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here and the integration of the crew module was going on at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Trivandrum, ISRO Chairman S Somanath said.

"We are working on the first mission of Gaganyaan. The status today is the rocket, the S200 stage, the L1, C32 stage are at Satish Dhawan Centre," he said. *—PTI*

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3 AWARDS FOR 'AATTAM'

Regional movies dominate Nat'l awards

Rishab Shetty

Nithya Menon

Sooraj Barjatya **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Regional cinema dominated the National Film Awards announced on Friday with best feature film going to Malayalam movie 'Aattam: The Play' and Rishabh Shetty bagging best actor for the Kannada hit 'Kantara'. The best actress prize was shared by Nithya Menen, for the Tamil film 'Thiruchitrambalam', and Manasi Parekh for the Gujarati movie 'Kutch Express'. The lone Bollywood presence in the top categories for the 70th edition of the National Awards was 'Uunchai' with Sooraj R Barjatya named best director. The adventure film, centred on four aging friends readying to scale Mt Everest, also won Neena Gupta a best supporting actress prize.

A big winner in the awards for 2022 was the Haryanvi film 'Fouja', which got Pavan Malhotra a best supporting actor and won two other awards -- best debut film of a director for Pramod Kumar and best lyrics to Naushad Sadar Khan.

'Aattam' won two more awards -- best screenplay (original) for Anand Ekarshi and best editing for Mahesh Bhuvanend. Sharmila Tagore and Manoj Bajpayee starrer 'Gulmohar', a family drama exploring the meaning of family and home, was judged best Hindi film with its director Rahul V Chittela taking home the award for best dialogue writer with Arpita Mukherjee. AR Rahman bagged the best music director for 'Ponnyin Selvan-Part 1'. *—PTI*

TOP WINNERS

- Best Feature Film: Aattam
- Best Popular Film: Kantara
- Best Actor: Rishab Shetty, Kantara
- Best Actress: Nithya Menon and Manasi Parekh
- Best Director: Sooraj Barjatya
- Best Kannada Film: KGF: Chapter 2
- Best Hindi Film: Gulmohar

CENTRE GIVES NOD TO NAMMA METRO PHASE 3

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

The Central government on Friday approved two crucial corridors under Bengaluru Metro's Phase-3 project. The green light has been given for Corridor-1, spanning 21 stations from JP Nagar 4th Phase to Kempapura, and Corridor-2, connecting Hosahalli to Kadabagere with nine stations.

The total estimated cost for these projects is Rs 15,611 crore. Corridor-1, primarily along the Outer Ring Road's western side, will require acquiring private land for station construction and road widening. To expedite the process, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) will compensate property owners with double the market value, as determined by a government committee.

—Salar News

CRIME BEAT

Man accused in 50 cases held by City cops

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

Girinagar police has arrested Narasimha Reddy, a notorious thief involved in over 50 criminal cases across the City on Friday. Reddy, a native of Solur in Nelamangala, was apprehended in the Gudemaranahalli forest area after a dramatic pursuit. According to the press release, "The accused had recently committed a house burglary within Girinagar limits and fled into the forest with stolen jewelry. Known for his audacious challenges to police during chases, Reddy was finally captured with approximately one kilogram of gold worth Rs 70 lakh." In a separate operation, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has arrested five individuals involved in a high-profile cyber fraud scheme. CID seized Rs 1.76 crore. *—Salar News*

Red-yellow ID tags must for State govt employees

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

The State government has issued an order mandating all government employees to wear a red-yellow identity card tag as part of the 'Name of Karnataka, Swashagali Kannada' campaign, celebrating the milestone of the State's renaming, on Friday. The initiative is part of a broader effort to celebrate and promote the cultural and historical significance. Sandeep BK, Under Secretary to Government, Department of Personnel and Admin Reforms, confirmed the new directive. The directive instructs all competent authorities within government and government-owned offices, including State Government departments, corporations, boards, directorates, and commissionerate, to ensure that their employees are provided with the new red & yellow ID tags. *—Salar News*

1 more female foeticide racket busted in Mandya

MYSURU, 16 AUG

Mandya Health department officials have uncovered another feticide racket in Nagamangala taluk on Friday. Two people, including a Health Department employee, have been arrested while attempting to terminate a pregnancy at a farmhouse in Mavinakere village. The authorities caught the duo red-handed, along with the expectant woman's husband, at the crime scene. Dhananjay, a D-group employee in the Health Department and owner of the farmhouse, is one of the arrested. Investigations have revealed that this was the woman's third termination. The prime accused, Abhishek, managed to escape during the raid. The health department seized scanning equipment and abortion kits from the location. *—Salar News*

CM requests Foxconn to invest more in Karnataka

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

The Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday assured Taiwanese electronics major Foxconn of his government's complete support and commitment to ensure it gets all the assistance required and requested the company to further invest in the State. He held discussions with Young Liu, chief executive officer and chairman of Foxconn and his team, during the dinner meeting organised here. He said, the State has established itself as a powerhouse in the Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) sector. Foxconn is setting up an iPhone assembly plant (Project Elephant) worth Rs 22,000 crore and has acquired 300 acres of land in the ITIR Industrial Area, located in Doddaballapura and Devanahalli Taluk. *—PTI*

Resident doctors hold candle march demanding an increase in stipend and also condemn the rape and murder of a trainee medic at RG Kar Medical College, Kolkata, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Friday; A medico sells panipuri in a cart labelled 'underpaid doctors' to highlight their plight; Bengaluru South MP CN Manjunath, who is also a doctor, joins a protest
PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD

Kolkata rape: OPDs across State to stay shut

Doctors also seeks the inclusion of pvt hospitals under KPME Act to ensure quality care

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

In a show of solidarity with their colleagues in Kolkata, private hospitals across the State will suspend Out-Patient Department (OPD) services on Saturday. The decision comes in the wake of the brutal rape and murder of a trainee medical student in the West Bengal capital, which has sparked outrage and demands for improved safety for healthcare workers.

Indian Medical Association (IMA) called for the strike to highlight the precarious conditions medical professionals face. The association is pressing for stricter laws to protect doctors and hospitals, including designating healthcare facilities as "safe zones" and enacting a Central Protection Act.

"We are demanding better laws to safeguard healthcare workers," Dr HM Prasanna from Pristine Hospital told Salar News. "We need transparency in crime investigations and justice for the victim's family," he added.

While OPD services will be disrupted, emergency care will continue as usual, Dr Govindaiah Yatheesh, President of the Private Hospital and Nursing Association, said. He added that the one-day strike is a symbolic protest.

The association is also seeking the inclusion of private hospitals under the KPME Act to ensure quality care.

Government hospitals, however, will operate normally. Dr Basalingappa R Mukkuppi, Joint Secretary of the Karnataka Association of Resident Doctors, assured that OPD services will continue uninterrupted. However, resident doctors will participate in the protest as per the IMA's directive.

—Salar News

Kolar docs condemn Kolkata horror

Kolar, 16 Aug

In a show of solidarity with the medical fraternity, students and staff of Sri Devaraj Urs Medical College in Kolar protested on Friday against the murder and rape of a resident doctor in Kolkata. Protesters demanded swift action from the West Bengal government to apprehend the culprits and ensure the safety of medical professionals. Dr Prabhakar, the college principal, expressed deep anguish over the incident, calling it a heinous crime against a noble profession. "Doctors dedicate their lives to saving others, and it is appalling that such a tragedy has befallen one of our own," Dr. Prabhakar said. He appealed to the public to join the fight against such inhuman acts. Hundreds of doctors participated in the protest, underscoring the widespread outrage over the incident. *—Salar News*

Mysuru: Docs hold stir, demand better infra

MYSURU, 16 AUG

Junior and resident doctors protested against the administration of KR Hospital on Friday in Mysuru. They urged the government to upgrade the hospital's infrastructure and the fulfilment of their various demands. Following the protest, services in the hospitals including the Outpatient Department were hit. They also condemned the brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and demanded safety for the woman doctors in all State-run hospitals.They demanded to intensify the investigation and urged for a capital punishment. *—Salar News*

Why mum on Kolkata rape case: BJP hits out at INDIA

- Addressing a press conference here, Poonawalla took a dig at the INDIA bloc for their silence on this issue

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla on Friday demanded that the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee resign as he accused her of saving the perpetrators of the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RJ Kar Medical College on 9 August.

Addressing a press conference here, Poonawalla took a dig at the INDIA bloc for their silence on this issue.

He alleged there was no rule of law West Bengal and charged that Mamata was more interested in saving the perpetrators, not in saving the victim, as the accused were linked to the TMC.

"It is evident that there were more than one rapists. They have caught Sanjoy Roy, who was working in the police welfare board despite having complaints against him of beating his pregnant wife and stalking. This is the state of police under Mamata," he alleged.

He accused the opposition of being part of "a conspiracy of selective silence and selective outrage."

"You pick up a case, you see the colour of the victim, political colour of the accused, you see the other antecedents of the accused, the state where the incident happens and then you react. This is their commitment to women's issues. There is a secular silence. Nobody will seek the resignation of Mamata," he said.

—PTI

Engineers work on repairing Pampa Sagar dam gate in Koppal

KOPPAL, 16 AUG

Engineers have been sweating it out to fix a new crest gate of the Pampa Sagar dam on Tungabhadra river in Koppal after the existing one was swept away on 11 August.

The replacement of the crest gate started from Wednesday night and is likely to take at least another 24 hours to 48 hours, sources in the Water Resources department said.

The State government has roped in hydro-mechanical engineer N Kannaiah Naidu from Hyderabad to fix the 19th gate of the dam, the sources added. "Naidu has been camping in Koppal for the past three days. Efforts were on to fix a new gate." Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Naidu said usually the life span of the crest gate of a dam is about 40 years but the one which swept away, had served 30 more years than the average. After the gate gave way late on Sunday night, all the gates of the dams were opened and water was released to prevent any damage to the dam. The exercise included reducing the existing water holding capacity 105 TMC to 65 TMC to minimise the stress on the dam and carry out repair work. *—PTI*

KIA receives ACI's level 5 accreditation, 1st in Asia

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

Kempegowda International Airport operated by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has marked a significant milestone by becoming the first airport in Asia to receive Airports Council International's (ACI) the highest Level five accreditation, officials said on Friday.

The City Airport has made a remarkable 95.6 per cent reduction in Scope 1 and 2 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, attaining the highest emission elimination by an Indian airport, achieved seven years ahead of the initial target of 2030, they said.

The accreditation comes into effect from 5 May, 2024.

"BLR Airport transitioned to 100 per cent renewable electricity.

To offset its residual emissions, BLR Airport has procured ACI approved carbon units from verified carbon removal projects. It has committed to offsetting residual emissions through in-house green landscape projects, further demonstrating its dedication to build a sustainable future," BIAL said in a statement.

"Achieving Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions seven years ahead of our target will reinforces our dedication to creating a greener future for all," Hari Marar, Managing Director and CEO of BIAL said. *—PTI*

ECI ANNOUNCES DRIVE FOR VOTER LIST VERIFICATION

MYSURU, 16 AUG

Election Commission of India (ECI) has scheduled a special drive for the verification of the voter's list, including the inclusion and deletion of names, to be conducted from 20 August to 18 October 18 across the State.

Individuals who will turn 18 years by January 1, 2025, are eligible to include their names in the voters' list. Citizens can utilise the respective forms issued by the ECI to make changes. Moreover, changes to mobile phone numbers can be made using the Voter Helpline application. Booth level officers will conduct door-to-door visits. *—Salar News*

TEMPORARY HALT

Western Ghats land conversion stopped

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

In a bid to protect the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats, the Forest Department has recommended a temporary halt on all land conversion proposals in the region. The move comes amid growing concerns over the impact of human activities on the fragile ecosystem.

Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre has instructed officials to revisit the Kasturirangan report, which was recently re-notified by the Central government. The report will be discussed in an upcoming Cabinet meeting as part of a broader strategy for the Western Ghats.

"We are temporarily suspending land conversion activities until a comprehensive Zonal Regulation and Master Plan for land use is in place," said Khandre. He emphasised the increasing frequency of landslides and hill collapses in the region, highlighting the urgent need for conservation measures.

The Department plans to create a detailed master plan that will not require legislative changes but can be implemented quickly through inter-departmental cooperation. Under this plan, clear boundaries will be defined for towns and villages, with areas outside these limits designated as Green Zones. Farming will be the only permitted activity in these zones, with other activities deemed violations.

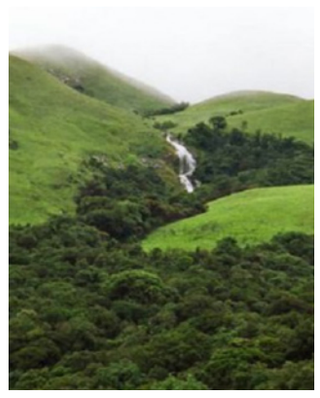


PHOTO: PTI

The aim is to strike a balance between environmental protection and the livelihoods of local residents. By preventing unauthorized constructions, such as homestays and resorts, the government hopes to ensure the sustainable management of the Western Ghats. *—Salar News*

'State's decision to close accounts with SBI, PNB suspicious'

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

Rajya Sabha member Lahar Singh Siroya on Friday said the State government's decision to close its accounts with the State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank looked "arbitrary and suspicious" in view of a Rs 187 crore scam in a State-owned corporation through the Union Bank of India.

He sought to know why the two nationalised banks were targeted when all the banks are governed by the Reserved Bank of India guidelines.

Quoting media reports, BJP leader Siroya said all the departments have been directed to close accounts and withdraw deposits from these two banks. The reports also said no further deposits or investments will be allowed in these banks.

"This move by the State government looks arbitrary and suspicious to me, especially after the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation (KMVSTDC) scam came out, in which around Rs 187 crore was illegally transferred through a nationalised bank," he said. The scam came to light after the Accounts Superintendent of KMVSTDC, Chandrasekharan P, died by suicide. In his suicide note, he describe the scam. *—PTI*

RS 10 CR FROM MUDA

Govt allocates Rs 40 crore for Mysuru Dasara

MYSURU, 16 AUG

To make this year's Dasara celebrations a grand affair, the State government has allocated Rs 40 crore for the festivities. The announcement was made by District In-charge Minister HC Mahadevappa.

This includes Rs 10 crore from MUDA, Rs 5 crore from Mysore Palace Board and the rest of the funds will be given by the Department of Kannada and Culture.

The 10-day extravaganza, scheduled from 3 to 12 October, will witness many cultural events, illuminated streets, and a focus on the State's rich heritage. Rs 1.5 crore has been earmarked for Srirangapatna Dasara and Rs 2 crore for Chamarajanagar Dasara. The inauguration will be held atop Chamundi Hill. Krishnaraja MLA TS Srivatsa has asked the

HC Mahadevappa
PHOTO: X/@CMAHADEVAPPA

Dasara High Power Committee to invite Suttur Mutt Seer Shivarathri Deshikendra Swami. However, the Chief Minister will choose the guest of honour and other attendees for the Dasara inauguration.

This year's festivities include Yuva Dasara, Raitha Dasara, Women's and Children's Dasara and wrestling tableaux.

The traditional Gajapayana, where the Dasara elephants will be brought to the city, will be held on 21 August at Veeranahosahalli in Hunsur.

The city is set to be adorned with lights for 21 days till 24 October, culminating in a dazzling display at the iconic Mysore Palace. The district administration has been tasked with repairing roads and filling potholes to ensure a smooth experience for visitors. With a focus on the state's 50th year of formation, the committee has directed all districts to prepare tableaux on the region's culture, heritage, and the government's schemes. The Minister said he will ask the Chief Minister to write a letter to the Union Civil Aviation Ministry to operate special flights from Mysuru airport. Measures will be taken to manage traffic and crowd control, including restricting private vehicles on Chamundi Hills during Navratri. *—Salar News*

MISSING TECHIE FOUND IN NOIDA

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

After a 12-day search, the cops finally traced a software engineer, Vipin Gupta, who went missing on 4 August from City. He was traced to a mall in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. Gupta's disappearance had caused immense distress to his family, with his wife, Sriparna Dutta, taking to social media to seek help.

Earlier, speaking to **Salar News** she had alleged that the police had not made any headway in locating her husband despite an FIR being filed. The City police, however, have been lauded for their efforts in tracking down techie. Bank account withdrawals and technical evidence helped police to pinpoint Gupta's location. Vipin was last spotted around 12.42 pm on 4 August at the Tatanagar vicinity in Kodigehalli and had left his house on his green Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle. Police later found that Rs.1.8 lakh was withdrawn from his bank account. *—Salar News*

B'luru records hottest August day in 25 years

BENGALURU, 16 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Bengaluru has recorded its warmest August day in 25 years, with the City's India Meteorological Department (IMD) observatory registering a maximum temperature of 23.6 degrees Celsius on Friday morning. According to the IMD last year on the same day the temperature was recorded at 22.9 degrees Celsius. Friday's temperature was .7 degrees above normal.

N Puviarasan, IMD official for State Incharge for live forecast told Salar News, "The City recorded its warmest day because we have observed that in this month the local climate is at the weakest. As there is no formation of clouds the sunlight is not able to come to the earth's surface properly.

This disruption has led to irregular weather conditions across the region, contributing to the City's warmest day." IMD attributed the unusual and extreme weather patterns observed in Bengaluru to the poor effect of the monsoon session.

Historically, temperatures in the City have never crossed 23 degrees Celsius in August. However, this year it has defied the trend, with 23 degrees Celsius recorded on 14 August and 23.6 degrees Celsius on 16 August. However, light to normal rainfall is expected later this week.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday chaired a meeting with senior officials and asked them to take all the necessary precautionary measures.

The chief minister at the meeting stressed coordination among various departments and civic agencies in managing the situation.

—Salar News with PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Swamy moves Delhi HC over RaGa's citizenship

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Subramanian Swamy has approached Delhi High Court seeking directions to Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to decide his representation to cancel Indian citizenship of Congress leader and Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi. The plea is likely to be heard by the High Court next week. BJP leader said that in the company's Annual Returns filed on 10 October, 2005 and 31 October, 2006, Gandhi declared his nationality as British. MHA wrote to Gandhi on 29 April, 2019 asking him to "intimate the factual position" in this regard withing a fortnight. *—Courtesy Bar & Bench*

Bombay HC issues summons to BJP MP Narayan Rane

MUMBAI, 16 AUG

The Bombay High Court on Friday issued a summons to BJP MP Narayan Rane on Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Vinayak Raut's plea seeking cancellation of the former's election from the Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg constituency. Rane defeated Raut, a two-term MP, by a margin of 47,858 votes in his debut election for Lok Sabha. He polled 4,48,514 votes, while Raut secured 4,00,656 votes. Raut had last month filed an election petition in the high court, claiming that Rane had won the polls by "fraudulent means", and demanded the cancellation of the BJP leader's election from the Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg seat and that he be banned from contesting elections and voting for five years. A single bench of Justice SV Kotwal issued a summons (notice) to Rane and sought his response to the plea. The court has posted the matter for further hearing on 12 September. *—PTI*

Rape victim's kin urges security post Asaram's parole

SHAHJAHANPUR, 16 AUG

The family members of Asaram Bapu's rape victim have demanded an increase in their security after the self-styled godman was granted a seven-day parole. Asaram Bapu was convicted of raping a 16-year-old girl in 2013 in his Jodhpur ashram. In 2018, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Jodhpur High Court on Tuesday granted parole to Asaram for seven days for a medical treatment at an Ayurvedic hospital in Maharashtra under police custody. Following this, the victim's father, citing a threat to his family, said that the police force deployed at his place is insufficient and the security should be increased. He argued that "When Asaram was in jail, the main witness in his case, Kripal Singh, 35, was shot dead in Shahjahanpur Cantt area on 10 July, 2015, and another witness was also shot dead in Muzaffarnagar." The victim's father added that "he and his family are very scared since Asaram came out on parole. *—PTI*

Himachal Pradesh Cong MLA attacked on Punjab road

UNA, 16 AUG

Congress MLA from Kutlehar Assembly seat in Himachal Pradesh was attacked on Thursday by two bike riders in Hoshiarpur city while he was returning in his car from Jalandhar, police said. Vivek Sharma said the unknown persons attacked his car with a rod and broke its rear windshield. The incident took place when he was on his way to his native village. The MLA's driver chased the two for some distance, but couldn't catch up to them. Police have registered a case and a search is on to nab the attackers, Sharma told. *—PTI*

Major police reshuffle in J&K ahead of polls

Over 198 police officers transferred in 12 hours

SRINAGAR, 16 AUG

In three separate orders, the Jammu and Kashmir administration transferred senior police officers with immediate effect PHOTO:PTI

In a major shakeup in the Jammu and Kashmir Police, several senior officers were transferred by the administration on Friday while the intelligence wing got a new chief.

In three separate orders, the Jammu and Kashmir administration transferred senior police officers with immediate effect.

This came a day after senior IPS officer Nalin Prabhat was appointed as Special DG of Jammu and Kashmir Police. He will assume the role of the force's chief following the retirement of RR Swain on 30 September.

The developments in the Union Territory's police force as well as several transfers and posting of officials in the civil administration are seen by many as a precursor to the assembly election in the Union Territory that has to be held before September 30, a deadline set by the Supreme Court.

In a separate document, the government ordered the transfer of 12 senior police officers including Inspectors General of Police (IGPs) and Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs).

Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP (Hqrs) PHQ, with additional charge of IGP (Hqrs) PHQ, IGP (Technical Services) and IGP (Telecom).

In another order, the J-K administration shifted the police chiefs of several districts including those from the Jammu region that has witnessed an upsurge in terror attacks in recent months.

J&K awaits full statehood: Cong after polls announcement

Noting that Jammu and Kashmir still awaits full statehood, the Congress on Friday alleged the recent moves by the Union government have only added to the powers of the Lieutenant Governor there, "making a mockery of the powers of a duly elected state government".

The Opposition party's remarks came soon after the Election Commission announced that the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held in three phases from 18 September.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "For the past five years, the Indian National Congress has been consistently demanding that full statehood should be restored to J&K and that assembly elections should be conducted. J&K still awaits full statehood." *—PTI*

MVA MEET

Will back Cong, NCP(SP) as CM face, says Uddhav

MUMBAI, 16 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said that he will support any candidate nominated by the Congress and NCP (SP) as the Chief Ministerial candidate of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ahead of the Assembly polls in the State.

His Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally Sharad Pawar, who heads NCP(SP), did not touch upon the contentious issue but stressed the need for a single-point agenda to change the government in Maharashtra if the situation has to improve in the state.

Pawar told the MVA cadres the three partners will take along the Left outfits, Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWP) and Samajwadi Party by giving them due respect, and present a united face before the people of the state.

Congress too pitched for focussing on unseating the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition, with the party's state unit chief Nana Patole saying the leaders of INDIA bloc will decide on who will be the chief minister. Patole also claimed many BJP MLAs will join his party before the state assembly elections.

Thackeray said if the Lok Sabha polls were to protect democracy and the Constitution, then the assembly polls are a fight to preserve Maharashtra's self-respect.

Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (SP) on Friday criticised the Election Commission of India (ECI) for not declaring the poll schedule for Maharashtra along with that of Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, and said it seems the ruling Mahayuti wants more time to "fool" the people of the western state with their fake promises.

The ruling bloc, which consists of the BJP (9), the Shiv Sena (7) and the NCP (1), bagged just 17 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in the state, while MVA won 30 seats. *—PTI*

WHAT DID DEMONETISATION ACHIEVE: CONG

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Congress on Friday claimed the counterfeit notes have become rife once again and termed as an "eyewash" the government's assertion that the overall number of counterfeit notes detected has fallen.

Opposition also claimed that counterfeiting has just moved rapidly to higher-value notes. "Eight years after the non-biological PM ground the economy to a halt through demonetisation, it appears that counterfeit notes have become rife once again - The number of counterfeit Rs 500 notes of the new series that have been detected has nearly quadrupled between 2018-19 and 2023-24. The number of fake Rs 2,000 notes has tripled since 2020-21," Jairam Ramesh said.

The Congress leader posted a screenshot of a Rajya Sabha question reply by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary which stated that measures have resulted in a decrease in the number of pieces of denomination-wise counterfeit notes detected/reported in the banking system from 3,17,384 in the year 2018-19 to 2,22,639 in the year 2023-24.

"While the Government can claim that the overall number of counterfeit notes detected has fallen, this is eyewash," Ramesh said on X. If neither black money nor counterfeiting has been curbed, what has demonetisation achieved, Ramesh asked. *—PTI*

In call to Modi, Yunus assures safety of Hindus in Bangladesh

Nari Shakti Forum members take part in a protest over violence against minorities in Bangladesh after former PM Sheikh Hasina fled the country, from Mandi House to Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, on Friday PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Muhammad Yunus, the chief adviser to the interim government in Bangladesh, called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, assuring protection, safety and security of Hindus and all other minorities in his country.

This is the first conversation between Modi and Yunus after he assumed the responsibility following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

Modi said in a post on X that he reiterated India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh.

He said, "Received a telephone call from Professor Muhammad Yunus, @ChiefAdviserGoB. Exchanged views on the prevailing situation. Reiterated India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh. He assured protection, safety and security of Hindus and all minorities in Bangladesh."

Modi also underlined the importance of ensuring the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in Bangladesh, the statement said. *—PTI*

Protest in Delhi amid violence in B'desh

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

JP MP Bansuri Swaraj and JNU VC Santishree D Pandit were part of a march held here on Friday to protest alleged atrocities committed against minorities in Bangladesh.

Hundreds of women took part in the march organised by RSS-linked Nari Shakti Forum, which began from Mandi House and will end at Jantar Mantar. Suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma was also part of the march.

Protesters, carrying religious flags and placards, demanded that violence against minorities in Bangladesh be stopped. Most protesters tied black bands on their arms while some covered their mouths with black bands.

Bangladesh saw a spike in violence against members of Hindu community following the fall of the government led by Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled to India on 5 August following massive protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

Nari Shakti Forum member Shreyosi Sinha Basu said Hindus and Buddhists are being targeted in Bangladesh.

A large number of men also took part in the march. Bangladesh National Hindu Grand Alliance, a non-political Hindu religious organisation, has claimed that the minority community has faced attacks and threats in 278 locations across 48 districts. —PTI

BJP HAS NEITHER BEEN SECULAR NOR CIVIL: SIBAL

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch for a "secular civil code", Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Friday alleged that the BJP has neither been secular nor civil in the last 10 years.

In a post on X, Sibal asserted that a "secular and civil country is the need of the hour".

In his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort, Modi had said a "secular civil code" is the need of the hour for the country. He also described the existing set of laws as a "communal civil code" and termed them discriminatory.

Modi, in his Independence Day address on Thursday, said, "A large section of the country believes, which is true also, that the civil code is actually in a way is a communal civil code. It discriminates (among people)." *—PTI*

FACES ANTI-INCUMBENCY

BJP aims for hattrick in Haryana this polls

CHANDIGARH, 16 AUG

BJP is aiming for a hattrick in the Haryana Assembly polls to be held on 1 October but faces a tough challenge from a resurgent Congress which is looking to cash in on the anti-incumbency factor.

To offset the Congress challenge, BJP made a bold move by replacing Manohar Lal Khattar with its then state unit president Nayab Singh Saini as chief minister in March, ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Khattar got elected to the Lok Sabha from Karnal and was made a Union minister while Saini won the Karnal Assembly bypoll that was held along with the general elections.

Saini is the BJP's chief ministerial face for the assembly polls.

BJP came to power in Haryana on its own for the first time in 2014. Following the 2019 Assembly polls, the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) led by Dushyant Chautala joined hands with the BJP to form a government in the state after the saffron party failed to get a clear majority in the House.

The Election Commission on Friday announced that Assembly polls in Haryana would be held in a single phase on 1 October and the results would be declared on 4 October.

In the current 90-member Vidhan Sabha, BJP has 41 members, Congress 29, JJP 10, Independents 5, INLD and Haryana Lokhit Party has one member each while three seats are vacant. *—PTI*

VP attacks Rahul, says he is asking SC to give wings to 'anti-India' narrative

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

In an apparent attack on Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday expressed concern that a person holding a constitutional position is asking the Supreme Court to take suo-moto cognisance to give wings to a "narrative aimed at destroying our economy".

Dhankhar's remarks came after Congress on Sunday slammed Modi government over the Hindenburg Research's allegations against SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch, with Gandhi saying the integrity of the market regulator has been "gravely compromised" and demanded a JPC probe into the matter.

Not right to troll PM like this: Cong takes dig at VP

Congress took a swipe at Dhankhar over his remarks that a person holding a constitutional position was giving wings to a "narrative aimed at destroying our economy", saying "it is not right to troll PM Narendra Modi like this".

In a post in Hindi, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said, " Dhankhar, It is not right to troll PM Modi like this. I understand your pain -- Terrible unemployment, back-breaking inflation, declining income, helpless farmers, tax burden, increasing poverty, the gap of economic inequality, Tughlaq decrees instead of policy-making." *—PTI*

REVANTH PITCHES '4TH CITY'

Foxconn eyes investment in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, 16 AUG

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy with Foxconn Chairman Young Liu, in New Delhi, on Friday PHOTO: X/@revanth_anumula

Foxconn Chairman Young Liu met with Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in New Delhi on Friday and the latter invited the company to invest in a proposed "fourth city" to be developed on the outskirts of Hyderabad. Foxconn later has expressed interest in exploring investment opportunities in Hyderabad, Telangana government said.

Reddy assured Liu of full support, including necessary permits and incentives, for setting up factories in the state.

The Foxconn chairman noted that Hyderabad has the potential to expand in all sectors, including industrial and service sectors. Reddy said it would focus on multifaceted growth in sectors such as education, medicine, sports, electronics, electrical industries, and skill development.

The city will also feature a Young India Skill Development University.

Foxconn is the contract manufacturer of Apple iPhones in India and is estimated to employ over 40,000 people in the country.

The company's total investment in India is estimated to be in the range of USD 9-10 billion.

Rahul meets Foxconn chairman

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Liu also met and discussed the future of technological innovation in India and the world.

"With the right support, India's tech industry can be positioned for a significant leap forward," the former Congress chief said.

Liu announced plans for an initial visit by a team led by Foxconn's Chief Campus Operations Officer Kathy Yang and India representative V Lee. Liu, who is on an India visit, was conferred Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian award, on the eve of the 75th Republic Day this year. *—PTI*

Kerala CM protecting those behind 'kafir' post: UDF

KOCHI, 16 AUG

Congress-led Opposition UDF on Friday continued its attack on the ruling CPI(M) in Kerala over the "kafir" campaign that was carried out hours before the LS polls in Vadakara constituency, by accusing Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan of protecting those who were behind it.

The issue in question pertains to a social media post put up ahead of the Vadakara election that reportedly asked people not to vote for LDF candidate KK Shailaja as she was a "kafir" (non-believer).

Terming it a hate campaign akin to a terror act which was aimed at dividing people along religious lines for political gains,

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly V D Satheesan questioned why no case had been registered till date against those who spread the controversial post on social media.

Satheesan also questioned how the CM, who holds charge of the Home Department, can feign ignorance about the affidavit filed by the police in the Kerala High Court reportedly stating that the post in question was circulated on some CPI(M) online pages and WhatsApp groups.

"Where is the Kerala CM? Is he not aware of what is going on? The CM who also holds charge of the Home Department is claiming ignorance about the police affidavit in the High Court. The officer who filed it has been transferred.

He said that the Opposition will legally deal with the issue and will take every legal recourse available to them. *—PTI*

Molestation bid on Coimbatore house surgeon stirs protest

COIMBATORE, 16 AUG

An alleged attempt to molest a woman house surgeon at the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital sparked a spontaneous protest by around 150 house surgeons practising under the Compulsory Rotating Medical Internship here. The man involved in the act was taken into custody by the police following intervention by the hospital authorities, a senior medical officer said.The house surgeons staged a sit-in protest in front of the Dean's office from Thursday demanding safety of their female colleagues. The incident took place between the administrative block and the centenary building housing her hostel. *—PTI*

Body of man found stuffed in suitcase in Thane

THANE, 16 AUG

Police in Maharashtra's Thane district have launched a probe after the body of an elderly man was found in a suitcase dumped in an isolated place, an official said on Friday. The discovery was made near Varap village in Kalyan taluka on Thursday. A passerby, who had gone to the spot to relieve himself, noticed the suitcase. When he opened it out of curiosity, he found the body of a man, aged 60-70, stuffed inside, the official said. After being alerted, police and sniffer dogs were rushed to the scene, while the body was sent to a government hospital for post-mortem, he said, adding that a probe is underway. *—PTI*

Chhattisgarh police jawan killed in accidental firing

BIJAPUR, 16 AUG

A police jawan was on Friday killed when his service weapon allegedly went off accidentally in Naxalite-hit Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, a police official said.The incident took place at around 9 am on the premises of Bhairamgarh police station, when Head Constable Sannu Hapka was apparently cleaning his service rifle, he said.On Thursday, Hapka returned from leave and reported to duty at the police station. This morning, he was issued his service weapon for Road Opening Party (ROP) duty, he said.He took his rifle and went to the mess behind the police station to clean it, he said.On hearing the gunshot, his colleagues rushed to the spot and shifted him to a local community health centre where doctors declared him dead. He suffered a bullet injury on his chest, the officer said. *—PTI*

FIR against teacher for strip-searching Indore students

INDORE, 16 AUG

A first information report (FIR) has been registered against a teacher of a government school who allegedly strip-searched girl students to look for a mobile phone that rang during class in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, police said on Friday. The incident took place on 2 August. Malharganj police station in-charge Shiv Kumar Raghuvanshi said initial investigations have revealed that the teacher had "mentally tortured" minor girls by allegedly making them remove their clothes to find their mobile phones. An FIR was registered under sections 76 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe) and section 79 (acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and section 75 (cruelty to children) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, he said. The police have recorded statements of the victims, their parents and teachers, Raghuvanshi said. *—PTI*

HC raps police for hospital vandalism

The court says it was a 'sorry state of affairs' if police force could not protect their own men

KOLKATA, 16 AUG

Calcutta High Court on Friday described the vandalism at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital as an "absolute failure of state machinery".

Kolkata Police has arrested 25 people for their alleged involvement in the early morning vandalism on 15 August, with Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal admitting that, despite adequate security, they were unprepared for the violence and were caught off-guard.

The court's division bench led by Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam expressed disbelief that police intelligence failed to detect the gathering of nearly 7,000 people at the hospital in the early hours of Independence Day.

"It's hard to believe that police intelligence did not have information about a mob of such magnitude assembling at the hospital," Chief Justice Sivagnanam remarked.

The doctor, whose body was found on 9 August, was allegedly raped and murdered while on duty. A civic volunteer was arrested the following day in connection with the crime. The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday ordered the CBI to probe the crime.

Healthcare services in the state have remained crippled for eight consecutive days in a row due to the cease-work by junior doctors demanding justice for their colleague, with emergency and outpatient departments in most state-run hospitals still closed, causing significant distress among patients.

After learning about renovation work on one floor of the hospital where the body of the woman doctor was found, the Chief Justice said the court could order the closure of the medical establishment.

The bench directed police and the administrator of the hospital to file separate affidavits narrating the "true state of affairs" at the hospital and all connected matters on August 21 when the matter will be heard again.

The court, also comprising Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharyya, said police should place on record the entire sequence of events that led to the vandalism at the hospital.

The violence involved the destruction of the emergency department, nursing station, and medicine store, damage to CCTV cameras, and the ransacking of a stage where junior doctors had been protesting.

The court said the doctors working in the hospital have to be given adequate protection, or else they will not be able to discharge their duties.

"If police are injured, they are unable to control the mob, then the law and order situation has failed," the court said.

The court observed that it was a "sorry state of affairs" if police force could not protect their own men. *—PTI*

A room at RG Kar Hospital is seen ransacked after a mob vandalised portions of the hospital during a protest against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor, in Kolkata **PHOTO: ANI**

It was hard to believe that the police intelligence did not have information about the gathering of 7,000 people at the health facility

-Calcutta High Court

9 of 46 associations of IMA led by women: Study

Only nine of 46 associations under India's largest and oldest professional medical association, the IMA, are currently led by women, suggesting a "negligible" representation in its leadership, according to a study. Further, of the 92 individuals who have served as the presidents since the Indian Medical Association's (IMA's) inception in 1928, only one was a woman, said a team of researchers, including those from The George Institute for Global Health, New Delhi. *—PTI*

BJP WORKERS 'PREVENTED' FROM PROTESTING

KOLKATA, 16 AUG

BJP on Friday alleged that its workers were prevented from holding a rally in Kolkata to protest against the death of a woman doctor in the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in the city last week.

A stage that was set up at Shyambazar crossing in north Kolkata was dismantled by the police, a party leader said.

Several saffron party workers were rounded up and taken to central lock-up in Lalbazar police headquarters.

Police officers were not available for comment. *—PTI*

CBI taking over the case shouldn't lead to it being quietly buried

-Derek O Brien, TMC leader

ED arrests 4 in Rs 400 cr Chinese betting app fraud

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Four people have been arrested in a Rs 400 crore "fraud" online betting and gaming app allegedly linked to some Chinese nationals, Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Friday.

Arun Sahu, Alok Sahu, Chetan Prakash and Joseph Stalin were taken into custody under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in the case related to the app named 'Fiewin', the federal probe agency said in a statement.

The money laundering case stems from an FIR filed at the Cossipore police station in Kolkata against some unknown people for "cheating" and "conspiracy" with a number of online gamers through the app.

Since these four people played an "active role" in the Fiewin app-based scam and they are found to be involved in the offence of money laundering, they were arrested, the agency said.

The ED did not say when these persons were arrested but added that a special PMLA court in Kolkata sent them to 14 days of ED custody.

Probe found, the ED said, that Chinese nationals were operating the app with the help and support from Indian nationals.

The funds mobilised from "gullible" online gamers through the Fiewin app were deposited into the bank accounts of some people--called recharge persons -- who had allowed the use of their accounts by the app owners in lieu of certain commissions, as per the investigation conducted by the ED.

The agency found that Arun Sahu and Alok Sahu, based in Odisha's Rourkela, acted as "recharge persons" and the funds received in their bank accounts from the app were converted into cryptocurrency.

The duo deposited and "laundered" the cryptocurrency earned from Fiewin app and credited into the wallets of Chinese nationals on Binance, a foreign crypto exchange, it said. *—PTI*

2 'IED-LIKE DEVICES' FOUND IN GUWAHATI

GUWAHATI, 16 AUG

Two 'IED-like devices' were found in Guwahati on Friday, taking the total number of 'bomb-like substances' seized across Assam in the last 24 hours to 10 after the banned ULFA (I) claimed to have planted 24 explosives to trigger serial blasts in the state, a top police official said.

One of the devices was found in Satgaon area, near Narengi Army Cantonment, and another at Last Gate in close vicinity of the state secretariat and ministers' colony, where the chief minister's residence is also located. The United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent), in an email to media houses, including PTI, on Thursday gave out a list identifying exact locations of 19 bombs with photographs but could not pinpoint the remaining five spots. *—PTI*

WARNS DEVELOPERS

Bombay HC pushes for slum-free Mumbai

MUMBAI, 16 AUG

Bombay High Court on Friday said the vision should be to make Mumbai a slum-free city and raised concerns about the plight of slum dwellers who become "victims at the hands of private developers".

A division bench of Justices GS Kulkarni and Somasekhar Sunderesan emphasised the need for strict and robust implementation of the Maharashtra Slum Area (Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment) Act.

"Vision is to have Mumbai, which is considered an international city and the financial capital of our country, slum-free. We need to have an absolutely slum-free city. This Act will help that vision," the court said.

The bench said the implementation of provisions of the Act lies with the government as the mandate lies with them.

The bench was set up last week to undertake a "performance audit" of the Act pursuant to the Supreme Court's directives in July.

The apex court had raised concerns about the working of the Act. The High Court, on Friday, stressed the need for sustainable development.

Citing the example of London and other foreign cities, where the emphasis is given to large open spaces and not a single brick is permitted to be laid, the court said, "We need sustainable development. We cannot just have a concrete jungle with no open space." *—PTI*

FEDERATION TO OPPOSE

HC restores WFI's IOA-led ad hoc panel

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Delhi High Court on Friday restored the mandate of Indian Olympic Association's (IOA) ad hoc committee constituted for running the affairs of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on a plea by celebrated wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and her husband Satyawart Kadian.

The court, in an interim order, said the IOA's decision to dissolve the ad hoc committee was incompatible with Union Sports Ministry's order suspending the WFI shortly after the December elections, while adding that until the suspension order is not recalled, it is necessary for the ad hoc committee to manage the federation's affairs.

WFI said it will challenge the order, saying the "interference" could jeopardise the participation of Indian wrestlers at the upcoming World Championships.

Justice Sachin Datta turned down the petitioners' prayer to appoint a retired high court or Supreme Court judge as the administrator of WFI, and said it shall be open to the IOA to re-constitute the ad hoc committee.

The wrestlers, who were at the forefront of last year's protest at Jantar Mantar demanding the arrest of outgoing WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for alleged sexual harassment of seven women grapplers, had moved the high court earlier this year for setting aside and declaring as illegal the elections held to elect the office bearers of the federation held in December.

Sanjay Singh, a Brij Bhushan loyalist, was elected the new WFI chief in the polls held on 21 December 21, 2023.

The Centre had, however, suspended the WFI on 24 December, 2023, three days after it elected the new office bearers, for allegedly not following the provisions of its own constitution while taking decisions, and requested the IOA to constitute an ad hoc committee to manage and control its affairs.

In February, UWW lifted the suspension, leading to the IOA also dissolving its ad hoc committee on 18 March. *—PTI*

Sanjay Singh, a Brij Bhushan loyalist, was elected the new WFI chief in the polls held on 21 December, 2023 **PHOTO: PTI**

HC refuses to hear Spicejet on grounding of 3 engines

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Delhi High Court on Friday refused to grant an urgent listing of low-cost airline Spicejet's plea challenging an order to ground three aircraft engines by today and hand those over to the lessors within 15 days.

The plea was mentioned for urgent hearing before a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora. The bench said listing the plea during the day was not possible and it will be heard on 20 August.

Spicejet challenged a single judge's 14 August order directing it to ground three engines by Friday and hand them over to their lessors within 15 days. The judge had directed the airline to offer prior inspection of the engines to the lessors -- Team France 01 SAS and Sunbird France 02 SAS -- through their authorised representative at the Delhi airport within seven days. Senior advocate Amit Sibal, representing Spicejet, insisted that the plea be heard in the post-lunch session of the court as there is grave urgency and the grounding of three engines would lead to the grounding of two aircraft. This would cause grave inconvenience to passengers as flights would have to be cancelled and tickets are already booked, the counsel submitted, adding there are 21 aircraft with the airline. The court had passed the order on pleas by the lessors seeking a direction to Spicejet to hand over the possession of three engines on termination of the lease agreements. *—PTI*

BOOST FOR WEATHER FORECAST

ISRO launches EOS-08 Earth Observation Satellite

SRIHARIKOTA, 16 AUG

ISRO successfully launched its third and final developmental flight of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle here on Friday whose payloads can be used in applications like satellite-based surveillance, disaster and environmental monitoring, fire detection, volcanic activity among others.

The flight-SSLV-D3 would also pave the way for the industry to collaborate with ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd for taking up launches using the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle.

As the six-hour countdown for the mission concluded, the SSLV rocket carrying the primary Earth Observation Satellite EOS-08 lifted off majestically from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here, situated about 135 km east of Chennai at a prefixed time of 9.17 am and later achieved its mission.

While the maiden mission of SSLV in August 2022 did not yield the desired results for the scientists as the launch vehicle did not place the satellites into the intended orbits, the subsequent one, SSLV-D2-EOS-07 in February 2023 was a success.

ISRO had planned for the latest mission to be launched on August 15 at 9.17 am but it was rescheduled for 24 hours later with a 60-minute launch window.

After a flight of about 10-12 minutes, the primary Earth Observation Satellite got separated successfully. Within a few minutes, a SR-O DEMOSAT Satellite developed by Space Kidz India weighing 200 grams also got separated, signalling the mission's success.

Friday's successful mission enables NewSpace India Ltd to commence the dedicated commercial launch of satellites to industry players who are keen to launch satellites weighing up to 500 kg into Low Earth Orbits (LEO) or up to 500 km above Earth.

A SSLV rocket is shorter at 34m (compared to PSLV rockets which are 44m tall) and are used to place satellites (mini, micro or nano satellites) that weigh up to 500kg below 500km of LEO. The satellites carried in the mission weigh 175.5 kg and the launch vehicle comprises three solid propulsion stages and a liquid module as a terminal stage.

The key features of SSLV vehicles are -- it provides low-cost access to Space, offers low turn-around time and flexibility in accommodating multiple satellites, launch on demand feasibility and demands minimal launch infrastructure.

A former ISRO scientist in a brief interaction with PTI had said the cost of SSLV would be around 20-30 per cent lesser than that of a PSLV mission, which uses bigger rockets capable of deep space missions.

He was also of the view that SSLV rockets are not only used for placing satellites in LEO but also injecting them in the Sun Synchronous Orbit (SSO), based on the demand of a customer. *—PTI*

ISRO's SSLV-D3 carrying satellite EOS-08 lifts off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

KITE FESTIVAL

Participants prepare a kite during Denpasar international kite festival in Indonesia's Bali. The event is a seasonal religious festival, intended to send a thanking message to the Hindu gods to create abundant crops and harvests
PHOTO: PTI

28% UG med students suffer from mental illness: Survey

Survey finds in last 12 months, 16.2 per cent medical students had the tendency of self-harm or suicide
PHOTO: CHARLIE HEALTH

Nearly 28 per cent of UG and 15.3 per cent of PG medical students reported having been diagnosed with mental health conditions, according to an online survey conducted by a National Medical Commission (NMC) task force.

The survey, which included 25,590 undergraduate students, 5,337 postgraduate students, and 7,035 faculty members recommended that resident doctors work no more than 74 hours per week, get a weekly one-day off and seven-eight hours of daily sleep.

Thoughts of self-harm or suicide in the last 12 months were reported by 16.2 per cent MBBS students while the number was recorded at 31 per cent in MD/MS students, according to the report by the National Task Force on Mental Health and Well-being of Medical Students.

According to the task force survey report that was finalised in June this year, feelings of loneliness or social isolation are common, with 8,962 (35 per cent) experiencing them always or often and 9,995 (39.1 per cent) sometimes. Social connectivity is an issue for many, as 8,265 (32.3 per cent) find it difficult to make or maintain social connections and 6,089 (23.8 per cent) find it 'somewhat difficult'.

Regarding adequate knowledge and skills for managing stress, 36.4 per cent reported that they feel lack of knowledge and skills to manage stress. Faculty or mentors are seen as extremely unsupportive by 18.2 per cent.

According to the survey, the majority of students (56.6 per cent), find their academic workload manageable but heavy, while 20.7 per cent consider it too heavy, and only 1.5 per cent find it light or too light, the survey showed.

Balancing academic work with personal life is a struggle for 56.3 per cent of UG students. Medical curriculum-induced stress is a significant factor, with 11,186 (43.7 per cent) finding it extremely or significantly stressful and 9,664 (37.8 per cent) moderately stressful. The frequency of exams is extremely or significantly stressful for 35.9 per cent and moderately stressful for 37.6 per cent, the survey found. Accessibility to mental health services is rated as very or somewhat inaccessible by 18.6 per cent students and the quality of these services is perceived as very poor or poor by 18.8 per cent.

The analysis of ragging and stress-related parameters for 25,590 undergraduate medical students provides significant insights into their experiences and stress levels.

A majority (76.8 per cent), reported not experiencing or witnessing any form of ragging or harassment, while 9.7 per cent reported such experiences. Regarding institutional measures, 17,932 (70.1 per cent) students believe their college has adequate measures to prevent and address ragging, while 3,618 (14.1 per cent) disagree, and 4,040 (15.8 per cent) are unsure, the survey showed. As for PG students, regarding academic stress, 20 per cent students admitted that they find the current academic workload frequently challenging, 9.5 per cent too intense, while 32 per cent reported manageable academic stress levels.

Close to half the PG students (45 per cent) revealed working for more than 60 hours a week with more than 56 per cent not getting their weekly offs.

A significant number of PG students -- 18 per cent -- reported that ragging was still there and hurt them, the task force said underlining "this underscores the ongoing issue of ragging within some academic environments".

It said 1425 (27 per cent) reported experiencing harassment from senior PG students in clinical settings, while 1669 (31 per cent) reported similar experiences from faculty and senior resident doctors.

Awareness regarding anti-ragging regulations is relatively high (84 per cent), but there is still a significant minority (nearly 20 per cent) unaware of these regulations, which suggests the need for increased education and communication efforts, the task force said.

Most PG students admitted having experiencing moderate to very high stress levels (84 per cent). However over 40 per cent of them feel that this high perceived stress levels are a way to have the workload reduced.

This underscores the need for effective stress management and mental health support structures within medical institutions, the task force said.

A significant majority of postgraduates, 3419 (64 per cent), reported that workload adversely affected their mental health and well-being.

They cited factors such as long daily working hours, continuous duty for two-five days, and inadequate infrastructure and support at their work places as contributing stressors.

Additionally, 1034 (19 per cent) of postgraduates expressed the need to alleviate stress through substance use, including tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs. Moreover, 1409 (26 per cent) of PG students recognised a strong association between stress and substance use among postgraduates.

Over 10 per cent of 5,337 such students admitted that they planned suicidal attempts in the past one year while additionally, 237 (4.44 per cent) PG students admitted to attempting suicide in the past year.

A notable proportion (17 per cent) of PG students reported inadequate support by their guide during their thesis, emphasising the importance of addressing this issue to uphold educational standards and support student learning effectively.

—PTI

SALAR ساہر

Four main symptoms that can detect Ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancers are often found when they are already advanced and hard to treat.

Researchers have long believed this was because women first experienced symptoms when ovarian cancer was already well-established. Symptoms can also be hard to identify as they're vague and similar to other conditions.

But a new study shows promising signs ovarian cancer can be detected in its early stages. The study targeted women with four specific symptoms – bloating, abdominal pain, needing to pee frequently, and feeling full quickly – and put them on a fast track to see a specialist.

As a result, even the most aggressive forms of ovarian cancer could be detected in their early stages.

So what did the study find? And what could it mean for detecting – and treating – ovarian cancer more quickly?

Why is ovarian cancer hard to detect early?

Ovarian cancer cannot be detected via cervical cancer screening (which used to be called a pap smear) and pelvic exams aren't useful as a screening test.

Current Australian guidelines recommend women get tested for ovarian cancer if they have symptoms for more than a month. But many of the symptoms – such as tiredness, constipation and changes in menstruation – are vague and overlap with other common illnesses.

This makes early detection a challenge. But it is crucial – a woman's chances of surviving ovarian cancer are associated with how advanced the cancer is when she is diagnosed.

If the cancer is still confined to the original site with no spread, the five-year survival rate is 92 per cent. But over half of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer first present when the cancer has already metastatised, meaning it has spread to other parts of the body.

If the cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes, the survival rate is reduced to 72 per cent. If the cancer has already metastasised and spread to distant sites at the time of diagnosis, the rate is only 31 per cent.

There are mixed findings on whether detecting ovarian cancer earlier leads to better survival rates. For example, a trial in the UK that screened more than 200,000 women failed to reduce deaths.

That study screened the general public, rather than relying on self-reported symptoms. The new study suggests asking women to look for specific symptoms can lead to earlier diagnosis, meaning treatment can start more quickly.

What did the new study look at?

Between June 2015 and July 2022, the researchers recruited 2,596 women aged between 16 and 90 from 24 hospitals across the UK.

They were asked to monitor for these four symptoms such as persistent abdominal distension (women often refer to this as bloating); feeling full shortly after starting to eat and/or loss of appetite; pelvic or abdominal pain (which can feel like indigestion); needing to urinate urgently or more often.

Women who reported at least one of four symptoms persistently or frequently were put on a fast-track pathway. That means they were sent to see a gynaecologist within two weeks. The fast track pathway has been used in the UK since 2011, but is not specifically part of Australia's guidelines.

Some 1,741 participants were put on this fast track. First, they did a blood test that measured the cancer antigen 125 (CA125). If a woman's CA125 level was abnormal, she was sent to do a internal vaginal ultrasound.

What did they find?

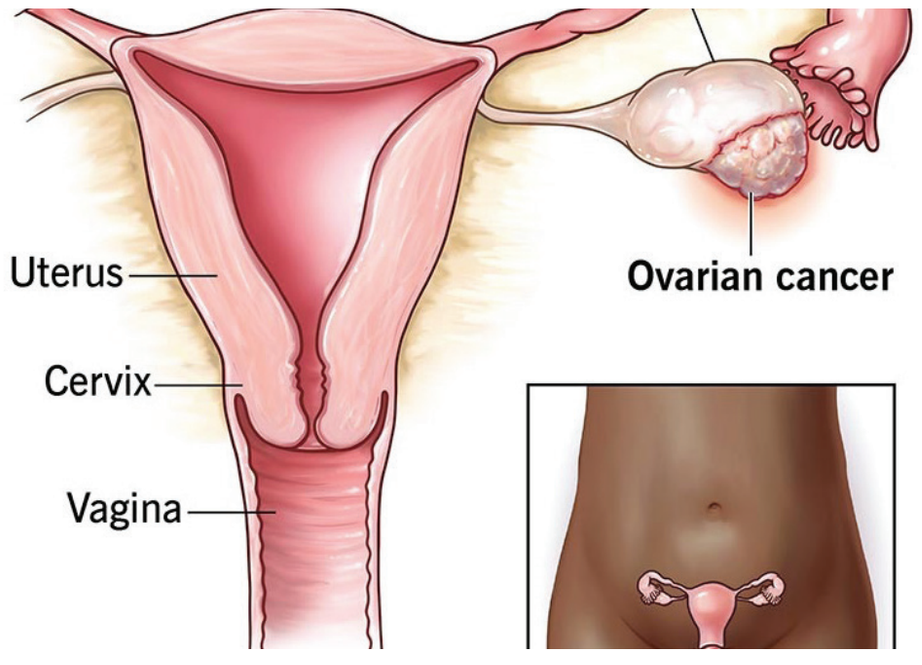
The study indicates this process is better at detecting ovarian cancer than general screening of people who don't have symptoms. Some 12 per cent of women on the fast-track pathway were diagnosed with some kind of ovarian cancer.

A total of 6.8 per cent of fast-tracked patients were diagnosed with high-grade serous ovarian cancer. It is the most aggressive form of cancer and responsible for 90% of ovarian cancer deaths.

Out of those women with the most aggressive form, one in four were diagnosed when the cancer was still in its early stages. That is important because it allowed treatment of the most lethal cancer before it had spread significantly through the body.

There were some promising signs in treating those with this aggressive form. The majority (95 per cent) had surgery and three quarters (77 per cent) had chemotherapy. Complete cytoreduction – meaning all of the cancer appears to have been removed – was achieved in six women out of ten (61 per cent). qIt's a promising sign that there may be ways to "catch" and target ovarian cancer before it is well-established in the body.

— The Conversation



The four symptoms in Ovarian cancer include bloating, abdominal pain, needing to pee frequently, and feeling full quickly
PHOTO: CLEVELAND CLINIC

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Local Russians are worried amid Ukraine's Kursk offensive

For over a week, Ukrainian forces have advanced in Russia's southwestern border region, taking control of dozens of towns and villages. While the Ukrainian push is mainly into the Kursk region, people are now also being evacuated from the neighboring region of Belgorod.

DW spoke with residents of both Belgorod and Kursk about what's been happening — and the extent to which they trust Russian authorities to tell them the truth.

State TV reports 'temporary problems'

Last Friday, 10 air raid sirens shattered the silence in the town of Kursk, according to various residents. Margarita, who did not want to give her real name, told DW that life in Kursk remained "calm," and that people were going to work, shops and out for walks as usual.

"Sirens often wail, but we're used to it now," she said. "It's a regional alarm, not just for us," she said, adding that state television reports had only refered to "temporary problems."

However, Margarita has heard from relatives that the fighting has been more intense than reported on TV, and that people have fled from the parts of Kursk region on the border with Ukraine. However, she believes the current incursion will be "short-lived," and doesn't want to leave her home.

Antonina also lives in Kursk, but has a sister who lives in Sudzha, now occupied by Ukrainian troops. "When the shelling started, my sister Julia fled Sudzha in a mad rush," she said.

Julia and her family are now temporarily staying with relatives in Oryol, about 260 kilometers further north toward Moscow, said Antonina. However, her sister had to leave all her documents, including her bank cards, behind. "But she's most worried about the house and her animals," explained Antonina. "They had to abandon piglets, ducks and chickens."

Antonina said her sister was now looking for a shelter for her family. Due to supply bottlenecks, they have not yet been able to pick up food rations, and they're hoping to soon receive the 10,000 rubles (around €100, $110) promised by the state for everyone who has been forced out of their home — one of the most discussed topics on Russian social networks.

"My God, that's absurd!" wrote Anastasia. "Of course, nobody has pointed out that the money is barely enough to buy a tent." Other commenters have remarked that the sum is just enough to buy food and medicine for one or two days.

Russian Emergency Ministry declared a state of emergency in the Kursk region
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

People in nearby Belgorod prepare for the worst

Nina, a young resident of the neighboring Belgorod region, told DW early this week that she was also increasingly hearing air raid sirens. She also preferred to remain anonymous. While she spoke with DW by phone from her room, a siren could be heard wailing in the background.

Nina said there has been talk about a possible invasion of their region, with more and more Russian troops arriving in Belgorod since the start of the Ukrainian offensive. The governor of Belgorod has since declared a state of emergency for the region and evacuations have begun.

Nina said she has noticed that people in Belgorod have increasingly been criticizing Russian authorities, including the president. "My friends and relatives who support the war are already calling Putin a weak leader, because he's doing nothing," she said.

Many locals no longer trust authorities

Social networks are already seeing an increase in reports of missing people — people in Sudzha, out of contact for days. Some are looking for older relatives, others for acquaintances who had gone to the region to help evacuate family members. So far, some 40 people have been reported as missing.

"The Russian Federation has cut off the power supply to all these villages in order to stop the Ukrainian troops," wrote one user, named Pyotr, on one such site. "Added to that, both sides have been engaging in electronic warfare."

But Russian authorities have stressed that telecommunications and mobile internet are still working in eight districts in the Kursk region, and are now free of charge — calls can even be made without credit, according to the telecommunications ministry. However, posts on social networks suggest that only a few people still trust official information sources.

"There is no connection. Our relatives living in distant regions can't get in touch with us," wrote Juliana on the local page of a social network. According to Juliana, "people knew about the impending Ukrainian invasion ahead of time, but there were no warnings."

Another user named Svetlana asked: "Where was the secret service? They deceived the people!"

On the Russian social media network VKontakte, another user named Olga confirmed that the website of the Kursk regional authorities had called for the evacuation of the town of Lgov, where she had been vacationing with her mother nearby.

Local officials try to maintain calm

Official websites in the Kursk region are full of warnings about airstrikes, and the Russian Emergencies Ministry has declared a state of emergency in the region.

At the same time, officials appear to be trying to assuage concerns, describing the events of the last week as a "difficult operational situation" and saying refugees have been "forcibly resettled."

Denis Grekov, a political scientist in Russia, has taken a dim view of the authorities' response. "The people living in the Russian border regions near Ukraine are in urgent need of reliable information," he said. "After all, this is a security issue."

— DW News

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Saudi crown prince worried about being assassinated

RIYADH, 16 AUG

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman reportedly expressed concerns about the potential risk to his life if he proceeds with a normalisation agreement with Israel without securing concessions for the Palestinians. According to a Politico report the crown prince questioned what the US had done to protect Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who was assassinated by Islamist militants in 1981 following a historic peace deal, and emphasised the importance of including a clear path to a Palestinian state in any future agreement. Despite these concerns, it is believed that he still intends to move forward with establishing ties with Israel. As part of the negotiations, the United States is offering several assurances to Saudi Arabia. *—Agencies*

Magnitude 6.3 earthquake jolts Taiwan

TAIPEI, 16 AUG

An earthquake of magnitude 6.3 struck east Taiwan on Friday, according to the Central Weather Administration (CWA), according to Taiwan News. There have been no reports of earthquake-related casualties or damage as of now. Hualien County, Taitung County, Yilan County, Nantou County, Taichung, Chiayi County, Changhua County, and Yunlin County all recorded a 4 on the seismic intensity scale. Hsinchu County, Miaoli County, Taoyuan, New Taipei, Chiayi, Kaohsiung, Hsinchu, and Tainan were all found to have an intensity level of 3. Intensity levels of two were recorded in Penghu, Taipei, Keelung, and Pingtung counties. *—AP*

Flood ravages Thame village in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 16 AUG

A massive flood swept through Thame village in the Everest Region of Nepal on Friday afternoon. Laxman Adhikari, Chairperson of the Khumbu village council, confirmed that the flood caused massive destruction in the lower belt of Thame. "It is yet to be confirmed whether the flood was caused by a glacial outburst or some other reason, but we have confirmation that the village in Thame has been ravaged by the flood. Locals, while reporting to the authorities, claimed it to be a glacial outburst," Adhikari said. The Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Village Council posted a video clip on its Facebook page, which shows the flood entering the village and inundating houses. Thame, a traditional Sherpa village, is located at an altitude of around 3,800 meters in the Khumbu Valley. *—ANI*

Wanted Peru gang leader arrested in US

NEW YORK, 16 AUG

A reputed Peruvian gang leader suspected in nearly two dozen killings in his home country has been arrested in New York by US immigration authorities. Gianfranco Torres-Navarro, the leader of "Los Killers" who is wanted for 23 killings in his home country, was arrested on Wednesday in Endicott, New York, about 145 miles (233 kilometres) northwest of New York City, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement said Thursday. He is being held at a federal detention facility near Buffalo pending an immigration hearing, Immigration and Customs Enforcement said. Torres-Navarro, 38, entered the US illegally at the Texas-Mexico border on 16 May. He was arrested the same day and given a notice to appear US Immigration and Customs Enforcement said. *—AP*

Ukraine gains control of Russian town

Russia claims that its forces have wiped out over 2,400 Ukrainian troops in the last 9 days

Russia attacks Ukraine's secret facilities in the port city of Odessa **PHOTO: X/ @FTN**

KIYV, 16 AUG

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his country's forces have taken full control of the strategic Russian town of Sudzha in the Kursk region in their incursion into Russian territory.

Zelenskyy also said on Thursday that a military commander's office is being set up in the town, which had a pre-war population of around 5,000 people. Russia did not immediately respond to Zelenskyy's statement, but its defence ministry said earlier Thursday that Russian forces had blocked attempts to take several other communities.

On Wednesday, Russian officials had also denied that Ukraine captured the town. "There are units from the Russian Defense Ministry, too, in Sudzha now, as the enemy is in and around certain parts of the town. Active fighting has been taking place daily there. The enemy cannot claim full control of Sudzha because they [Ukrainian troops] do not actually control it," Major-General Apty Alaudinov was quoted as saying by TASS news agency. *Courtesy, Al Jazeera*

'World is on the brink of WW3'

KYIV, 16 AUG

Russian lawmaker Mikhail Sheremet said that the supported from the West, the Ukrainian invasion of the Kursk region has brought the world closer to a world war, RIA Novosti reported, quoted by Reuters, BTA reported. Ukrainian troops crossed the border into Russia's Kursk region on 6 August. Russia claimed that its forces have wiped out over 2,400 Ukrainian troops in the 9 days. *Courtesy, AKMU*

Ukraine using UK-gifted tanks in Russia offensive

LONDON/KYIV, 16 AUG

Tanks donated by the UK to Ukraine have been deployed as part of Kyiv's ongoing incursion into Russia, British media reported on Thursday. It is believed to be the first time the Challenger 2 tanks have been used in active combat on Russian territory, Sky News and other UK outlets said.

They did not specify how many of the tanks were thought to have been deployed by Ukraine

However, Moscow said it would send more troops to defend the neighbouring border region of Belgorod amid the ongoing Ukrainian assault. British equipment supplied to Kyiv since Russia invaded more than two years ago includes Storm Shadow cruise missiles and a squadron of 14 Challenger 2 tanks deployed early last year. *Courtesy, The Dawn*

It is the first time the Challenger 2 tanks have been used on Russia **PHOTO: X**

Diplomacy intensifies to halt Israel-Hamas war

JERUSALEM, 16 AUG

International diplomacy to prevent the war in Gaza from spreading into a wider regional conflict intensified Friday, with the British and French foreign ministers making a joint trip to Israel while internationally mediated cease-fire talks in Qatar were expected to enter their second day.

The new push for an end to the Israel-Hamas war came as the Palestinian death toll in Gaza climbed past 40,000, according to Gaza health authorities, and fears remained high that Iran and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon would attack Israel in retaliation for the killings of top militant leaders.

"This is a dangerous moment for the Middle East," British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said. "The risk of the situation spiraling out of control is rising. Any Iranian attack would have devastating consequences for the region."

According to authorities death toll in Gaza is now 40,000 **PHOTO: PTI**

Lammy and French Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné were expected hold a joint meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer.

"It's never too late for peace," Séjourné said. "We must at all costs avoid a regional war, which would have terrible consequences."

International mediators believe the best hope for calming tensions would be a deal between Israel and Hamas to halt the fighting and secure the release of Israeli hostages *—AP*

Netanyahu denies he spoke to Trump

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied he had a phone call with US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Gaza ceasefire. "Contrary to reports, Netanyahu did not speak yesterday with Donald Trump," a statement said. *—Agencies*

Hezbollah video show missile facility

The Hezbollah terror group releases a propaganda video showing an underground facility, apparently in Lebanon, used to store and launch precision missiles. The voice of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, boasting about the group's missile capabilities, can also be heard in the video. *—Agencies*

Entitled to personal attacks on Kamala: Trump

WASHINGTON, 16 AUG

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has said he is "entitled" to personally attack his Democratic rival Kamala Harris because he doesn't "have a lot of respect for her", as he dismissed calls from allies to refocus his campaign on policy issues in his bid to reclaim the White House.

Trump, 78, said he is "angry" at Vice President Harris, 59, over the Biden administration's handling of issues ranging from inflation to immigration.

"I don't have a lot of respect for her. I don't have a lot of respect for her intelligence. I think she'll be a terrible president. I think it's very important that we win. And whether the personal attacks are good or bad ... she certainly attacks me personally," the former president told reporters at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey on Thursday.

Trump was responding to questions from his party members urging him not to make personal attacks on Harris, who is the first woman of colour running for the presidency.

Trump has struggled to deliver a consistent message targeting Harris, even as Republicans argue they have a strong case against her on the economy and immigration. While he has at times focused on the issues, has mocked Harris' laugh and her intelligence. Trump also faced sweeping backlash after questioning her racial identity. He said Harris is "weird in her policy", adding that "people don't know who she is yet."

" She is weird in her policy. Who wouldn't want to have strongholds, who doesn't want to have lower taxes? You know, all my life I've watched as politicians campaigned and I've always been on for the most part, on the other side. This is the only campaign I've ever heard of. When they're saying we're going to increase your taxes and then people say they're going to vote for," Trump said. *—AP*

Republican candidate Donald Trump said that he is angry at Vice President Kamala Harris over handling inflation and immigration **PHOTO: PTI**

Another murder case against B'desh ex-PM Hasina

DHAKA, 16 AUG

A murder case was filed against Bangladesh's former prime minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday over the death of a teacher, the latest in the string of cases filed against her after her ouster.

The case was filed against Hasina and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader in Bogura. Hasina, 76, fled to India on August 5 after she was forced to resign following a massive protest by students against a quota system in government jobs.

Sheikh Hasina **PHOTO: ANI**

Ninety-nine other local leaders and activists of her party were also sued in the case filed with Bogura Sadar Police Station over the murder of 35-year-old Selim Hossain, a resident of Palikanda village of Shibganj upazila, on August 4.

On 4 August, the day before Hasina resigned and fled the country in the face of a student-led mass uprising, Hossain joined students' protest in Bogura's Satmatha area.

Meanwhile, the interim government in Bangladesh led by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus was expanded on Friday with four more advisers joining his team. With these four, the strength of the members in the interim government's advisory council rose to 21. President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oaths to the four new advisers at Bangabhaban, the seat of the government. *—PTI*

PAKISTAN REPORTS THREE MPOX CASES, FIRST IN ASIA

PESHAWAR, 16 AUG

At least three patients with mpox virus have been found so far in Pakistan, it emerged on Friday as the government decided to strengthen the screening system at the airports. The mpox detection in Pakistan is the first in Asia and it might be more easily transmitted. The World Health Organisation has declared the spread of mpox a global health emergency. All three patients belong to the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in the northwest, the militancy-whacked region bordering Afghanistan. Salim Khan, the director general of health services for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that two patients were detected on their arrival from the United Arab Emirates, while a third patient's samples had been sent to the National Health Institute in Islamabad for confirmation. According to the spokesperson of the Federal Ministry of Health, the last patient belongs to the Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *—PTI*

Sudan's bill on warrantless arrests becomes law

JUBA, 16 AUG

South Sudan's controversial security legislation allowing the arrest of people without warrants has become law even though the president has not signed it, parliament's spokesperson said Thursday.

Spokesperson Oliver Mori said that the bill had become law "automatically" in accordance with the constitution following the lapse of 30 days since it was presented to President Salva Kiir on 12 July.

Nine Western envoys, including representatives of the US and Britain, said in July that South Sudanese should have the right to participate freely in political and civic expression without fear of arbitrary arrest or intimidation by security personnel. *—AP*

Paetongtarn Shinawatra becomes Thailand's youngest PM

BANGKOK, 16 AUG

Thailand's Parliament elected Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the youngest daughter of the divisive former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, as the country's new prime minister Friday.

Paetongtarn becomes Thailand's third leader from the Shinawatra family, after her father, who was ousted by coup before returning from exile last year, and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra, who lives in exile. Paetongtarn also

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

became Thailand's second female prime minister after her aunt.

She is the leader of the ruling Pheu Thai party but was not an elected lawmaker, which was not required for her to be a candidate for prime minister. Paetongtarn was the sole nominee and got a majority of the votes in Parliament with the voting ongoing.

The last prime minister had been removed by the Constitutional Court two days ago over an ethics violation. Her public entry into politics came in 2021 when the Pheu Thai party announced she would lead an inclusion advisory committee . *—AP*

TYPHOON AMPIL LASHES EASTERN JAPAN WITH HEAVY RAIN

SEOUL, 16 AUG

Flights and trains in Tokyo area cancelled as weather agency warns people of strong winds and heavy rains.

A man in Tokyo struggles against strong wind brought by Typhoon Ampil. Japan has ordered thousands of people to evacuate and cancelled dozens of flights as a "very strong" typhoon swerves dangerously close to the east of the country.

The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) on Friday estimated that Typhoon Ampil was situated 170km south of Choshi city in Chiba prefecture at 4pm (07:00 GMT), located near Tokyo in the eastern region of Kanto, public broadcaster NHK reported. Currently barrelling over the Pacific Ocean, Ampil is expected to get close to the greater Tokyo region by later on Friday, with "fierce winds" liable to "cause injuries from flying debris or even overturn trucks in motion", the JMA said.

The typhoon has wind speeds of 45 metres per second with maximum gusts of 60 metres per second (216kph), according to the agency. Its approach has prompted a number of municipalities in Kanto and elsewhere to urge residents to evacuate.

About 18,500 residents were ordered to evacuate from Mobara city in Chiba, east of Tokyo. Dozens of other cities opened special evacuation centres and advised voluntary evacuation. *—AP*

APPARENT OVERDOSE

5 charged in Matthew Perry's death

LOS ANGELES, 16 AUG

Five people including his personal assistant and two doctors have been charged in connection with Matthew Perry's death in what prosecutors called a "broad underground criminal network" dedicated to getting the "Friends" star the powerful surgical anesthetic that killed him.

The doctors preyed on Perry's history of addiction in the final months of his life last year to provide him with ketamine in amounts they knew were dangerous, US Attorney Martin Estrada said as he announced the charges Thursday.

"They knew what they were doing was wrong," Estrada said. One doctor even wrote in a text message, "I wonder how much this moron will pay" and "Lets find out," according to an indictment unsealed Thursday. Perry died in October due to a ketamine overdose and prosecutors said he received several injections on the day he died from his live-in personal assistant. *—AP*

Matthew Perry died in October due to a ketamine overdose and prosecutors said he received several injections on the day he died **PHOTO: GQ**

Gold plunges ₹400; silver rallies ₹800

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Gold prices plunged Rs 400 to Rs 72,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had closed at Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices rallied Rs 800 to Rs 84,000 per kilogram from Rs 83,200 per kg in the previous close. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 400 to Rs 72,400 per 10 grams. In the previous session, it ended at Rs 72,800 per 10 grams. On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,500.90 per ounce, up by USD 8.50 per ounce. "Gold rose slightly on Friday as geopolitical uncertainty continued to provide support. —*PTI*

Rupee settles flat at 83.94 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 16 AUG

The rupee stayed in a narrow range and settled flat at 83.94 (provisional) against the American currency on Friday, as the support from a rally in domestic equities and weak greenback was negated by foreign fund outflows amid geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 83.93 and touched the intra-day low of 83.96 against the greenback during the session. The local unit finally settled flat at 83.94 (provisional) against the dollar. On Wednesday, the rupee settled 3 paise higher at 83.94 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, was trading lower by 0.14 per cent at 102.66. —*PTI*

Aurobindo Pharma arm gets warning letter from USFDA

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Aurobindo Pharma Ltd on Friday said its arm Eugia Pharma Specialities Ltd received a warning letter from the US health regulator for its formulations manufacturing unit in Telangana. A formulation manufacturing facility of Eugia Pharma Specialities Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary, received Official Action Indicated (OAI) status by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). Subsequently, the USFDA had determined the inspection classification status of this facility as 'Official Action Indicated (OAI)'. As per the USFDA, OAI implies that the regulator may withhold approval of any pending product applications or supplements filed from such facility till the outstanding observations laid down by it. —*PTI*

Food processing sector's FDI down 30% to ₹ 5,037 cr

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's food processing sector declined 30 per cent in the last fiscal to Rs 5,037.06 crore, according to official data. The FDI in the food processing sector stood at Rs 7,194.13 crore in 2022-23. According to the data presented by the Food Processing Industries Ministry in Lok Sabha, the FDI in food processing sector stood at Rs 5,290.27 crore in 2021-22 and Rs 2934.12 crore in 2020-21. FDI was Rs 6,414.67 crore in 2019-20; Rs 4430.44 crore in 2018-19; Rs 5,835.62 crore in 2017-18; Rs 4,865.85 crore in 2016-17; and Rs 3,312 crore in 2015-16 in the food processing sector. It has allowed 100 per cent FDI, under the government-approval route, for trading including through e-commerce. The export of processed foods declined 17 per cent to USD 10,881.81 million in 2023-24 from USD 13,078.3 million in the preceding fiscal. —*PTI*

MARKET JUMPS NEARLY 2% TO HIT OVER 2-WEEK HIGH

Sensex surges 1,330.96 points to settle at 80,436.84

MUMBAI, 16 AUG

Benchmark Sensex spurted by 1,330 points to close at a more than two-week high while Nifty rallied 397 points to settle above the 24,500 level following buying in IT shares and Reliance Industries and a sharp global stocks rally.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,330.96 points or 1.68 per cent to settle at 80,436.84, marking its best single-day gains in more than two months. During the day, it zoomed 1,412.33 points or 1.78 per cent to 80,518.21.

The NSE Nifty surged 397.40 points or 1.65 per cent to close at a two-week high of 24,541.15.

From Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, ICICI Bank and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers. Sun Pharma emerged as the only laggard.

All the sectoral indices closed in green. BSE Midcap spurted 1.8 per cent while Smallcap index rose by 1.7 per cent. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,595.27 crore on Wednesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) were buyers as they bought equities worth Rs 2,236.21 crore, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.22 per cent to USD 80.05 a barrel.

Indian stock markets were closed on Thursday on account of Independence Day.

The BSE benchmark climbed 149.85 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 79,105.88 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty ended marginally up by 4.75 points or 0.02 per cent at 24,143.75. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- The NSE Nifty surged 397.40 points or 1.65 per cent to close at a two-week high of 24,541.15

Ola Electric shares surge nearly 16%

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Shares of Ola Electric Mobility Ltd surged nearly 16 per cent on Friday morning after the Ola Group announced its foray into the electric motorcycle segment with the launch of three models and two more in the pipeline. The company also reported a jump in revenue from operations for the April-June quarter of 2024-25. The stock jumped 15.77 per cent to Rs 128.09 on the BSE. At the NSE, it soared 15.59 per cent to Rs 128.20. Ola Electric Mobility on Wednesday reported a jump in revenue from operations in the April-June quarter of FY25 at Rs 1,644 crore against Rs 1,243 crore revenue recorded in the same quarter of the previous fiscal.

The June quarter has been a "good quarter" in terms of growth and profitability, Chairman and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal said in a post-earnings call. Meanwhile, the group has rebranded its ride-hailing service as Ola Consumer, announced a partnership with Open Network of Digital Commerce (ONDC) and launched automated warehousing solutions to cater to quick commerce requirements. —*PTI*

MUST PAY RS 810 CRORE

US court fines Vedanta's Sterlite for trade violations

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

An American court has ordered Vedanta Group-backed Sterlite Technologies' overseas arm to pay USD 96.5 million, about Rs 810 crore, in damages to US-based Prysmian for violating trade secrets norms, according to a regulatory filing and plaintiff's statement.

Additionally, the court has awarded USD 200,000 penalty on Stephen Szymanski, Sterlite Technologies Inc (STI) Executive Vice President for Americas Region, for misappropriation of trade secrets of Prysmian.

STI is the US subsidiary of Sterlite Technologies (STL) which has contested the judgement and may file an appeal against it.

Prysmian in a statement said a South Carolina jury on 9 August ordered in favour of Prysmian following a three-week trial in the district court of Columbia, South Carolina.

"The jury found that Sterlite was unjustly enriched by taking Prysmian's trade secrets and awarded USD 96.5 million in damages against Sterlite Technologies, Inc. In addition, the jury found that Stephen Szymanski had been unjustly enriched by misappropriating Prysmian's trade secrets," Prysmian said in the statement dated 12 August.

Prysmian further said that the court awarded USD 200,000 penalty against Szymanski, personally.

STL in a regulatory filing on 10 August had informed BSE that it is not a party to this dispute neither are any claims being made against it.

STL had posted a consolidated loss of Rs 48 crore and decline of about 20 per cent in revenue from operations at Rs 1,218 crore in the first quarter ended 30 June, 2024. —*PTI*

PHOTO: STI TECH

UNDER PMLA ACT

Govt permits 15 firms to take up Aadhaar verification of clients

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

The finance ministry has permitted 15 securities firms, including SBICAP Securities, IIFL Securities, and Angel One, to conduct Aadhaar authentication of their customers.

The Revenue Department under the finance ministry has issued a notification under the Prevention of Money laundering Act allowing the 15 reporting entities to conduct Aadhaar-based KYC (know your customer) process.

The 15 entities also include JM Financial Services, Arihant Capital Market, SMC Global Securities, Aditya Birla Money, R.K. Stock Holding, Monarch Networth Capital, RKSV Securities, Comfort Securities, and OPG Securities Pvt Ltd.

The approval was granted after consultations with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) —*PTI*

The 15 entities also include JM Financial Services, Arihant Capital Market, SMC Global Securities, Aditya Birla etc. PHOTO: PTI

Equity investors richer by ₹ 7.30 lakh cr as stocks soar

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Investors' wealth soared by Rs 7.30 lakh crore on Friday, driven by a rally in equities, where benchmark Sensex jumped nearly 2 per cent amid easing fears of recession in the US.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 7,30,389.86 crore to Rs 4,51,59,833.55 crore (USD 5.38 trillion).

"Positive US economic data like cooling inflation and robust retail sales numbers shrugged off recession fears while talks of a rate cut by the US Fed as early as next month fuelled a mega rally across global equities, including India.

"The stability of the JPY has been instrumental in driving a global market recovery. Besides that, the strong US retail sales and a decline in weekly jobless claims have helped alleviate fears of a US recession.

The IT index soared 2.72 per cent, and realty jumped 2.45 per cent. Teck (2.23 per cent), auto (1.90 per cent), commodities (1.89 per cent), power (1.80 per cent), financial services (1.77 per cent) and consumer discretionary (1.74 per cent) also closed higher.

A total of 2,462 stocks advanced, while 1,467 declined and 107 remained unchanged on the BSE. —*PTI*

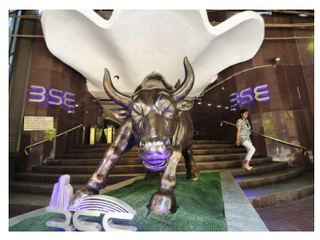


PHOTO: PTI

India's forex reserves drop $4.8B to $670.11B

MUMBAI, 16 AUG

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 4.8 billion to USD 670.119 billion for the week ended 9 August, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the kitty jumped by USD 7.533 billion to an all-time high of USD 674.919 billion.

For the week ended August 9, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 4.079 billion to USD 587.96 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units. Gold reserves declined by USD 860 million to USD 59.239 billion during the week, the RBI said. —*PTI*

GTRI bats for silver, gold duty cut withdrawal

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

With the government seeking a review of certain provisions of a free trade agreement with UAE, think tank GTRI on Friday asked for the withdrawal of duty cut concessions on platinum, silver, diamonds, gold jewellery, and tweak the rules of origin norms in the pact.

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), officially dubbed as Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on 18 February, 2022, and implemented on 1 May, 2022.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) has earlier stated that the pact contains provisions for unlimited imports of duty-free gold, silver, platinum, and diamonds into India over the next few years and it would hurt domestic industry.

In the review, it said India should focus on issues such as "withdrawing tariff cuts on platinum, silver, diamonds, and gold jewellery; adjusting value addition rules to exclude profit margins from the value addition calculations in the rules of origin; and banning the conversion of expensive products (silver bars) to cheaper ones (silver granules) to exploit CEPA benefits," the GTRI said.

The tariff or customs duty is 17 per cent with a TRQ of 2.3 tonne and the lower tariffs make imports from the UAE much cheaper than domestic products, —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

India is recognised as the global driver of steel demand growth

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

India has been recognised as the leading global driver of steel demand growth since 2021, according to a statement from the Ministry of Steel on Friday.

The ministry emphasized that, according to the World Steel forecast, the demand of steel globally is set to experience a 1.7 per cent rebound this year, reaching 1,793 metric tons. Additionally, it projected that by 2025, steel demand will see a further growth of 1.2 per cent, reaching 1,815 metric tons.

The ministry also highlighted that India's steel demand is expected to continue its upward trajectory with an 8 per cent growth over 2024 and 2025. This growth is largely attributed to the ongoing expansion across all sectors that uses steel, with a particularly notable contribution from sustained investments in infrastructure projects.

The performance of the steel sector in the first quarter of FY25 has set a new benchmark, it has surpassed the levels for this period than in any previous fiscal year. According to the Ministry of Steel, the steel sector is essential to vital industries including construction, infrastructure, automotive, engineering, and defence. In recent years, the steel industry has witnessed remarkable growth, with India rising to become a major global player in steel production.

India stands as the world's second-largest producer of steel.

The ministry stated that this growth highlights the country's significant role in shaping global steel markets and supporting industrial advancements worldwide. —*ANI*

India stands as the world's second-largest producer of steel PHOTO: PTI

National coal index drops 3.48% amid rising production

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

The Ministry of Coal announced that the National Coal Index (NCI) showed a decline of 3.48 per cent in June 2024, registering 142.13 points compared to 147.25 points in the same period last year, on Friday.

According to the Ministry of Coal, this drop indicates a stable and sufficient coal supply in the market, aligning with growing demands key sectors.

The country's coal production witnessed robust growth of 14.58 per cent in June 2024 compared to the same period last year, ensuring a stable supply to critical sectors dependent on coal, thus playing a crucial role in maintaining energy security. The premium on coal auctions serves as a barometer for industry sentiment, and the recent sharp drop in auction premiums points to an ample coal supply in the market. —*PTI*

KRISHI-DSS

Govt unveils satellite platform for farmers

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

The government on Friday launched a satellite-based agricultural decision support system to provide farmers with critical data for crop management and productivity enhancement.

Minister of State for Agriculture Bhagirath Choudhary unveiled the Krishi-Decision Support System (Krishi-DSS), a geospatial platform that will offer real-time information on crop conditions, weather patterns, water resources, and soil health.

"This platform is a new milestone for farmers amid growing climate challenges," Choudhary said at the launch event.

Krishi-DSS, developed using technology similar to the government's Gati Shakti initiative, will utilise satellite imagery to deliver early warnings about potential disasters such as pest attacks and extreme weather events.

Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi emphasized the benefits of space technology in agriculture and urged for expanded use of remote sensing across more crop varieties.

ISRO Space Applications Centre Director Nilesh M Desai noted that space technologies have been applied in the farm sector since 1969, stressing the need to extend their use beyond paddy and wheat.

The Krishi-DSS platform has been developed using RISAT-1A and VEDAS of the Department of Space, officials said. —*PTI*

Krishi-DSS platform has been developed using RISAT-1A and VEDAS of the Department of Space PHOTO: ANI

SBI hikes lending rate by 10 bps across tenors

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

State Bank of India, the country's biggest lender, has raised the Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points (0.1 percentage point), across tenors, making most of the consumer loans costlier.

For borrowers, this means higher EMIs and a potential impact on household budgets. It may also prompt prospective borrowers to reconsider the timing of taking on new loans, as interest rates could rise further in the near term.

This is the third time in a row that the bank has increased MCLR.

The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans such as auto and personal, is now pegged higher at 8.95 per cent against the earlier rate of 8.85 per cent, according to the information on its website.

The three-year MCLR is 9.10 per cent, while the two-year is now 9.05, up 10 basis points.

Among others, the rates of one-month, three-month and six-month tenors are in the range of 8.45-8.85 per cent. The MCLR on overnight tenor will be 8.20 per cent against 8.10 per cent. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ed Sheeran buys minority share ahead of EPL return

IPSWICH, 16 AUG

Lifelong Ipswich Town fan Ed Sheeran has bought a small stake in the club ahead of its return to the Premier League. "I am really excited to have bought a small percentage of my hometown football club," Sheeran said in a club statement. "It's any football fan's dream to be an owner of the club they support, and I feel so grateful for this opportunity. " Ipswich said Thursday that the British musician has acquired a 1.4 ownership stake, but will be a passive investor and not part of the club's board of directors. The club did not disclose the value of the deal. Sheeran is the club's most famous supporter and has been Ipswich's shirt sponsor since 2021. The club said that his new status as a minority owner will also grant him access to an executive box at Portman Road stadium. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AP

Golfer Akshay retains lead with 71 in Coimbatore open

COIMBATORE, 16 AUG

Chandigarh's Akshay Sharma shrugged off three bogeys on the front-nine to card a one-under 71 and retain his lead after the third round of the Coimbatore Open here on Friday. Akshay (69-65-71), who was two shots ahead at the halfway stage, now enjoys a one-shot lead at a total of 11-under 205. Delhi's Sachin Baisoya (70-69-67) kept himself in the hunt with a 67 that placed him tied second at 10-under 206. Dubai-based Indian rookie Rayhan Thomas, playing his first event on the PGTI this week, produced a solid 69 to also be tied for second along with Baisoya. Akshay, a two-time winner on the PGTI, managed to weather the storm on a day that witnessed windy conditions from start to finish. The 33-year-old, who has come close to winning on several occasions in the last two seasons, made a good start on day three with an early birdie on the second hole thanks to an exceptional approach shot. Sachin's round was highlighted by a couple of 20-feet conversions including one for eagle on the 13th and some excellent chip-putts. *—PTI*

India Legends Golf Championship to begin from 28 Aug

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

The Legends Tour will stage its first ever event in India in August with the India Legends Championship which is set to be held at the picturesque Jaypee Greens Golf Course from 28 August. The inaugural Legends Tour tournament in India will carry a handsome prize purse of $500,000 and will be hosted by the legendary Jeev Milkha Singh. The event will see 10 Indian golfers taking part, including the host as well as fellow Legends Tour member Jyoti Randhawa. The Legends Tour, earlier known as European Senior Tour, is the official tour for players over 50. It is part of the PGA European Tour alongside the DP World Tour and European Challenge Tour. *—PTI*

India colts to play friendlies against Indonesia

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Indian football team will play two friendly matches against Indonesia later this month in their preparation for the SAFF U17 Championships and the AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Thailand, the AIFF announced on Friday. The matches will be played at the Kapten I Wayan Dipta Stadium in Bali on 25 and 27 August. Ishfaq Ahmed, the head coach of the India U17 men's team, has announced a 24-member squad for the tour of Indonesia. *—PTI*

Indian Paralympics contingent gets grand send-off for Paris

The Paralympic Games will kickstart from 28 August

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

The Indian Paralympic contingent was on Friday accorded a grand send-off ahead of the Paris Games scheduled to be held from 28 August to 8 September.

The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) and Sports Authority of India (SAI) hosted the ceremony for the Indian team comprising 84 athletes across 12 disciplines, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo.

"Our para athletes have a remarkable ability to overcome obstacles and turn challenges into opportunities. They have shown remarkable determination and perseverance in their preparation for the Paris Paralympics 2024," Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said. "Many athletes have benefited from the Khelo India initiative, and a significant number from there will be going to the Paris Paralympics. The government is committed to providing them with the resources and support they need to excel at the highest level.

"As they embark on this important journey, we stand united in our support and are confident they will bring honour to our nation. We wish them the very best as they strive for excellence on the global stage," he said. India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics and PCI president Devendra Jhajharia hoped the country's athletes will produce another good show this time.

A special anthem, "Macha Dhoom," crafted by renowned music directors Vivek – Abhishek, was also launched during the event. "We are immensely proud of our athletes who have trained with unwavering dedication and passion. As they prepare to represent India on the world's biggest stage in Paris, they embody the spirit of resilience and determination that defines our nation," Jhajharia said. *—PTI*

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya poses for group photos during the send-off ceremony in New Delhi *PHOTO: X/@MANSUKHMANDVIYA*

Antil, Jadhav named Indian flag-bearers

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Tokyo Paralympics gold medal winner Sumit Antil and Asian Para Games silver medalist Bhagyashree Jadhav will be Indian flag-bearers at the opening ceremony of the Paris Paralympics. "Antil and Bhagyashree have been consistent performers over the years. They will be Indian flag-bearers at the Paris Paralympics' athletes march past," Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) chief Devendra Jhajharia told PTI. Haryana's javelin thrower Sumit won the Tokyo Paralympics gold medal with a world record throw of 68.55 metres in the F64 category. PTI *—PTI*

Grand chess tour: Nothing changes for Praggs, Firouzja leads

SAINT LOUIS, 16 AUG

R Praggnanandhaa *PHOTO: PTI*

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa could not really change his fortunes for the better and remained in last spot going into the final day of the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz chess tournament here.

Before that, he won a couple of games in the blitz section. Praggnanandhaa scored two wins at the expense of pre-event favourites Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia and Hikaru Nakamura of Russia besides a lone draw with tournament leader Alireza Firouzja of France but lost the remaining six games in the first leg of blitz that kept him on the bottom of the tables with only nine rounds remaining in the blitz section.

Alireza Firouzja made most of his opportunities count to shoot into sole lead on 17.5 points and now enjoys 1.5 points lead over Wesley So of United States, who happened to score the most (7/9) in the blitz section, and Nepomniachtchi. The other leader Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France slipped to fourth spot on 15.5 point, a half point clear of wild card Armenian-turned-American Levon Aronian.

Nakamura, who started off as a favourite in the blitz section, is in sixth spot on 13.5 points, ahead of tour leader and compatriot Fabiano Caruana who has 13 points. American Lenier Dominguez on 12 points is at eighth. *—PTI*

STANDINGS AFTER FIRST DAY OF BLITZ

1. Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 17.5; 2-3; Ian Nepomniachtchi (FID), Wesley So (Usa) 16 each; 4. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) 15.5 points; 5. Levon Aronian (Arm) 15; 6. Hikaru Nakamura (Usa) 13.5; 7. Fabiano Caruana (Usa) 13; 8. Lenier Dominguez (Usa) 12; 9. Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) 10; 10. R Praggnanandhaa (Ind) 6.5.. *—PTI*

Think about future, says hockey coach

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

"Forget the past and think about the future," this was Indian women's hockey team chief coach Harendra Singh's advice to his wards as he chalks out his side's roadmap for 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

After reaching a new high in Tokyo, where they finished a creditable fourth, the Indian women failed to qualify for Paris Games, where the men's team won a second consecutive bronze medal.

"When I took up this team, we had discussed this topic in length. I always look into the positive side and feel that something better is there in store for them. "Obviously girls were disheartened, the whole country was sad but I told them that there is something bigger waiting for them," Harendra, who was appointed to the role in April this year, told PTI Bhasha.

"I told them to forget about the past and think about the future. I have given this mission a name 'Road to LA 2028' and I think it will be a beautiful journey."

Harendra Singh *PHOTO: PTI*

Harendra, who was earlier in charge of the women's team in 2017-18, said his target is 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and advised his players to "forget the past and think about future".

"India won the first Olympic medal in hockey in Los Angeles in 1928 when the legend Dhyan Chand ji was the part of the team and what would be a better start than winning a medal in 2028 at the same place exactly after 100 years," said Harendra, who was earlier in charge of the women's team in 2017-18. *—PTI*

Have to prepare mentally to be a coach: Sreejesh

KOCHI, 16 AUG

Indian hockey's goalkeeping stalwart PR Sreejesh, who was given a grand welcome on his arrival at the international airport here, said he will be spending the next 2-3 months to mentally prepare himself to transition to a coach.

With regard to the enthusiastic welcome given to him, including a roadshow from the airport to Palarivattom here, he said it was like the "cherry on top of the cake".

"But, as a coach, what all I should do or the transition from a player to a coach, I have to mentally prepare for that. So, I will spend the next 2-3 months on that," he said. *—PTI*

I see myself playing till 2032: Vinesh hints at retirement U-turn

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Feisty wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Friday said that she might have continued her wrestling career until 20232. under "different circumstances" she could see herself competing till 2032 because she still has a lot of wrestling left in her but is now unsure about her future as things "might never be same again".

"Maybe under different circumstances, I could see myself playing till 2032, because the fight in me and wrestling in me will always be there. I can't predict what the future holds for me, and what awaits me in this journey next, but I am sure that I will continue to fight always for what I believe in and for the right thing," she wrote.

Vinesh had announced her retirement from the sport after her disqualification from the women's 50kg final for being overweight by 100gms. She had challenged the decision in the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) but her appeal was dismissed.

Vinesh Phogat *PHOTO: PTI*

In an emotional post on social media, Vinesh shared her childhood dream, the hardships she faced after losing her father and also put on record the contribution made by people in her extraordinary journey that ended in heartbreak in Paris.

"....all I want to say is that we did not give up, our efforts did not stop, and we did not surrender but the clock stopped and the time was not fair. So was my fate," she wrote, referring to the work she did with her team before the second day weigh-in.

She said her coach Woller Akos does not believe in the word 'impossible', and Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala was an angel.

Dr Pardiwala, who headed the 13-member medical staff that IOA had arranged to help the Indian contingent in Paris, was recently subjected to unfair criticism for Vinesh ending up 100gms more than the 50kg limit. "For me, and I think for many other Indian athletes, he is not just a doctor but an angel in disguise sent by god. When I had stopped believing in myself after facing injuries, it was his belief, work and faith in me that got me back on my feet again," Vinesh wrote. *—PTI*

Nagal returns to Davis Cup, Yuki opts out

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

India's top singles player Sumit Nagal on Friday returned to the Davis Cup team for the World Group I tie against Sweden but Yuki Bhambri has opted out of the September 14-15 contest, where former national champion Ashutosh Singh will serve as the new coach of the national team.

Nagal had missed the historic tie against Pakistan in Islamabad on grass court but the in-form player is back to lead the national team for the indoor hard-court contest in Stockholm.

Sasikumar Mukund, who is the third-highest ranked player at number 476, was not considered for selection as he is serving a two-tie suspension for his refusal to play the Pakistan tie early this year.

Apart from Nagal, Ramkumar Ramanathan, N Sriram Balaji, Niki Poonacha, who made his debut against Pakistan, and former national champion Siddharth Vishwakarma are part of the squad.

Sumit Nagal *PHOTO: PTI*

Aryan Shah has been named as the reserve player.

Yuki is the number one doubles player for India in Davis Cup now that Rohan Bopanna has retired. Since Yuki is not available, Ramkumar may be asked to play both singles and doubles. "We were given a list of available players and his name did not figure there, so we picked players who were available," added Bal. *—PTI*

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

MB SG to face Al-Wakrah, Tractor and Ravshan

NEW DELHI, 16 AUG

Indian club Mohun Bagan Super Giant were on Friday drawn alongside Al-Wakrah SC of Qatar, Iran's Tractor FC and FC Ravshan of Tajikistan in Group A of the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Two.

The draw was conducted at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

Mohun Bagan SG qualified for the newly-rebranded second tier men's AFC club competition by virtue of winning the 2023-24 Indian Super League Shield. The Mariners finished third in the 2023-24 AFC Cup Group Stage and failed to qualify for the knockout stage.

Al-Wakrah SC qualified for the Champions League Two by finishing fourth in the 2023-24 Qatar Stars League. This will be the Qatari side's first appearance in Asia since the 2001-02 Asian Club Championship. Iranian side Tractor FC also qualified with a fourth-place finish in the 2023-24 Persian Gulf Pro League. They have twice reached the Round of 16 of the erstwhile AFC Champions League in 2021 and 2016.

FC Ravshan booked their spot in the tournament as the runners-up of the 2023 Tajikistan Higher League. The side from Kulob has made four appearances in the AFC Cup but never managed to progress from the group stage.

The top two finishers from each group will advance to the Round of 16, to be played in February 2025. This will be followed by the quarter-finals in March and semi-finals in April, before the tournament culminates in a single-leg final on May 17 next year.

East Bengal FC, the other club representing India in the 2024-25 AFC club competitions by virtue of being the 2024 Kalinga Super Cup champions, lost their Champions League Two qualifying round match to FC Altyn Asyr on Wednesday. *—PTI*

Mohun Bagan SG qualified for the newly-rebranded second tier men's AFC club competition by virtue of winning the ISL Shield *PHOTO: PTI*

- Indian club Mohun Bagan Super Giant were on Friday drawn alongside Al-Wakrah SC of Qatar, Iran's Tractor FC and FC Ravshan of Tajikistan in Group A of the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Two

PKL AUCTION

Ajith, Jai & Arjun top picks on Day 2

MUMBAI, 16 AUG

Ajith V Kumar, Jai Bhagwan and Arjun Rathi secured handsome pay cheques as franchise owners spent a total of Rs 16 crores on the second day of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) Player Auction here on Friday.

A day after Sachin Tanwar and Iran's Mohammadreza Shadloui Chiyaneh emerged as the costliest buys, it was time for Ajith, Jai Bhagwan, Arjun and Mohd Amaan to hog the limelight as the duo emerged as the most expensive players in Category C and D.

While Ajith was acquired by Puneri Paltan for Rs 66 lakh, Jai Bhagwan was bought by Bengaluru Bulls for Rs 63 Lakh in Category C.

In category D, Arjun was fetched by Bengal Warriorz for Rs 41 Lakh, while Mohd. Amaan found a place in the Puneri Paltan team for Rs 16.2 lakh and Stuwart Singh was bought for Rs 14.2 lakh by U Mumba.

Ajith V Kumar was acquired by Puneri Paltan for Rs 66 lakh *PHOTO: X*

The 12 franchises went toe-to-toe in the Player Auction, spending a total of Rs 33.7 crores to get the services of the most sought-after Kabaddi players.

As many as six more players rewrote the record books as they all landed a deal in excess of Rs 1 crore with the franchises splurging Rs 17.782 crores on the opening day of auction.

In the last two days, as many as 118 players were sold during the Player Auction.

The 11th season is likely to begin in October this year.

Puneri Paltan had emerged champions after beating Haryana Steelers in PKL Season 10. *—PTI*

Lee leads rain-delayed Women's Scottish Open

IRVINE, 16 AUG

Two-time major champion Minjee Lee of Australia managed a strong wind and caught a break with rare sunshine in a wet Scottish summer with a 5-under 67 for a one-shot lead in the ISPS Handa Women's Scottish Open before play was stopped for the day.

Lydia Ko, coming off her Olympic golf medal that put her into the LPGA Hall of Fame, faced the worst of the weather at Dundonald Links and made five birdies in her round of 69. Former US Women's Open champion A Lim Kim and American Megan Khang were at 68.

The opening round was suspended by bad weather and a water-logged course. Lily May Humphreys of England was at 4 under with six holes to play. Play was halted at the start for about an hour because of rain, and there was another weather delay of 2 hours, 20 minutes.

Lee is coming off a disappointing Olympics outside Paris when she was never in the hunt and wound up finishing in a tie for 22nd. She played bogey-free on a tough course, picking up birdies on both par 5s on the back nine.

Lee figures she caught a break not having to deal with the brunt of the rain, although there was fierce wind. *—AP*